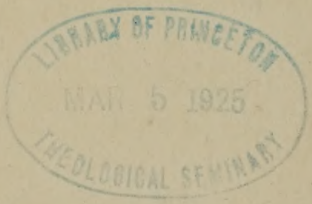

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Mores catholici

J. B. Cayshame

Mores Catholici;

OR,

AGES OF FAITH.

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BOOK IV.

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MORES CATHOLICI;

OR,

AGES OF FAITH.

THE FOURTH BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

No more discourse of earth and all its fair possessions, promised from the mountain, which heard the heavenly voice disclosing the way of happiness to men. I now must change the notes to tragic; for such are those which tell of mourners, though they were in mourning blessed. Solemn task! yet argument, not less concerned with beatitude than that which described the lives of those who secured, by meekness and poverty of spirit, both earth and heaven's eternal kingdom. Deep, mysterious theme! more than speech can tell, attractive, announced as it was in tone so soft and mild, as one might have thought never before met the ear on mortal strand, sounding as if from the voice of some angelic marshal, fanning us with swan-like wings, while the gates of lucid mansions opened to the music of this unearthly strain, which affirms that those who mourn are blessed, for that comfort shall be their's.

All generations of men have mourned; but how vain would be the search into ancient history, in hopes of discovering that they were therefore blessed! Here is however a new voice, and sweet, indeed, in mortal ears, which consoleth those who mourn with the assurance that they shall be comforted; and since this is the voice of Him, whose knowledge is the law of nature and of grace, we may be sure that henceforth the study of history will bring new results, and present a very different pheno-

mena from any thing that philosophers had ever before observed. It seemed no less strange to affirm, that the poor in spirit and the meek were blessed; and yet, what striking illustrations and evidence of that fact have we discovered in the history of the ages of faith? Let us feel emboldened, then, by his experience, and resume our study, giving it this new direction, investigating the annals of these ages of the world in especial reference to the tenor of man's woe, whether proceeding from the incidents to which he is obnoxious by nature, or from the influence of supernatural causes, which are the consequence of the light and life of faith.

But ere we proceed it may be well to remove the objection which some might advance against our intended course in general, from supposing that it obtruded upon them melancholy themes. Such persons must be reminded, that it is not religion's voice, transmitted in the writings of the middle ages, which first makes men acquainted with mourning, and that they will not be the less constrained to remember woe by attempting to banish the principles and associations of faith. To say nothing as yet in proof that it is faith which alone affords a remedy for the wounds of life, but leaving them to think as gloomily as they will of the influence which it sheds upon history, they must, notwithstanding, admit at once that, by nature, as men, independent of all tradition and revelation, they are, sooner or later, compelled, either by the experience of present sorrows, or by the fear and anticipation of future evils, to fall into the ranks of those who mourn—or, rather, as Cicero says, of the miserable. Do what they will, depart as far as they please from the philosophy of the middle ages, there is no avoiding this. As reasonably might they hope to be dispensed from death, as to pass through life, short as it is, exempt from the experience and the thoughts of woe. If they look at the world which surrounds them, and mark the countenances that front them on every side, they will find the greatest and most heroic men, visibly written mourners in their looks, like Spencer's gentle knight, who was armed, indeed, with glorious panoply—

"But of his cheere did seme too solemne sad*".

Melancholy is ascribed as an heroic quality to Hercules,

* Faery Quene.

Lysander, Ajax, Alcmæon, Bellerophon, Socrates, and Plato. There is no escaping it by taking refuge in boldness and absolute war against goodness. Cain was melancholy, as St. Augustin says* ; and who is not? It is propagated from Adam.

Mourning, then, by itself, formed no distinguishing characteristic of the ages of faith—

> " From time's first records the diviner's voice
> Gives the sad heart a sense of misery†."

Æschylus delivers this testimony ; and what a solemn melancholy breathes in the chorus of the Œdipus Coloneus, which sings the mourning of the human course! Never to have been born is best of all; but after having appeared, to descend again, as soon as possible, to the lower regions, while young, is next in degree of good.

" The happiness of man lasts not long," says Pindar‡. Would you hear the father of heroic poetry himself announcing his own conviction in the solemn words of his ideal hero. " O, Amphinomus! truly you seem to me to be wise, being the son of so great a father, whose fame is so widely spread; and they say that you are his son, and you resemble him; therefore, to you, I say, but do you hearken and consider it in your mind, that the earth produces nothing, not one animal breathing and moving upon it, more wretched than man §." You have here the affecting testimony of the human race to the misery of its condition, before it had beheld the light of Christ.

In whatever direction we turn through the world, we shall hear mourning's voice, whether it sound of sharp anguish, or breathe in sighs. Orosius, the historian, whom Alfred translated, and made so well known to our ancestors, diffused a tone of great melancholy over his history, which he had intended first to entitle, " De Miseria Hominum"—a title which, Bonarsius says, might be given to all history ‖. Hesiod says, that a thousand woes wander amidst men, that the earth is full of evils, the sea full of them ¶. Profound was the sense entertained by the ancients of the vanity of all human prosperity and joy; amidst their delights, they always felt as

* Epist. 105.
† Æschyl. Agam.
‡ Pyth. Od. III.
§ Od. XVIII. 125.
‖ In Præfat. ad gesta Dei per Francos.
¶ Op. et Dies.

if, to use their own expression, there was something cruel that would strangle them—

——— τρία μὰν
Ἔργα ποδαρκὴς ἁμέρα
Θῆκε κάλλιστ' ἀμφὶ κόμαις.

Remark what an instance is here furnished by Pindar in celebrating the glories of Xenophon of Corinth—"That one single day which passes so quickly! placed around his head these three illustrious deeds, or the crown, which was the reward of his victory in the Stadium, the Dialium, and the armed course *." And, again, the same expression occurs the day ταχυτὰς ποδῶν ἐρίζεται †; so that even when commemorating the glory of a conqueror, he deemed it right to remind him of the shortness of the day which procured it, and consequently of that in which he could enjoy it. Indeed, the Pæan, as a song of rejoicing for victory, always bore a mournful sense in reference to the battle, as well as a joyous sense in reference to the victory. Dionysius, after relating the combat of the Horatii and Curatii, and the joyful triumph of the victor, adds, "but it was necessary that, as a man, he should not be happy throughout, but should excite the envy of the demon; who, when he had exalted him, contrary to the expectation of all, and, in a moment, even to the highest pinnacle of glory and happiness, cast him down the very same day into the miserable calamity of killing his own sister ‡." Cicero, in his oration for the Manilian law, furnishes a similar example of the scrupulous timidity and extreme caution with which it was deemed right to speak of the happiness of the prosperous, so fearfully uncertain was its stability, and so necessary did they feel it to be always prepared against what they termed the stroke of envious fate. This, too, is what the lofty grave tragedians taught—

ἰὼ βρότεια πράγματ' εὐτυχοῦντα μὲν
σκιά τις ἂν τρέψειεν· εἰ δὲ δυστυχεῖ,
βολαῖς ὑγρώσσων σπόγγος ὥλεσεν γραφήν.
καὶ ταῦτ' ἐκείνων μᾶλλον οἰκτείρω πολύ §.

* Olymp. XIII. † Olymp. I.
‡ Antiquit. Roman. Lib. III. cap. 21.
§ Æsch. Agam. 1327.

Let no one, then, ascribe melancholy to the history of the renovated race. Bitter and profound has been the mourning of men in all ages, who enjoyed not the consolations of faith, as antiquity will avow, and even our own times bear witness; for many of the modern writers have raised again the desolating voice of the heathen lamentations, if not with that Philoctetæan clamour which old philosophy deemed unbecoming, yet often in a strain of even still more wild despair. What is the tone of modern literature and modern poetry? Does it indicate smiling hearts, elate with peacefulness and joy? Truly it expresses only that sadness of the world which, in the language of the Holy Spirit, worketh death*. Only those suggestions which proceed from anguish of the mind and humours black, that mingle with the fancy, distempered, discontented thoughts, inordinate desires, like those which moved Dicœopolis to exclaim, "How many things devour my heart! very few things delight me; truly not more than four. What torment me are as numerous as the sands of the sea shore†." In fact, without the Catholic piety, the Catholic type and hope to support one, life must necessarily grow every day, in the estimation of the heart, more flat, stale, and unprofitable; for there is constantly something dropping off, something dying, something happening for the last time, so that every man will have the sad experience of the troubadour and warrior, Bertram de Born, who complains of this constant and rapid decay, saying, "Tous les jours vous verrez qu' aujourd'hui vaut moins qu' hier." Age itself disables the mind from supporting the calamities of life, as is confessed by Dante in an affecting allusion to his own power of enduring the misfortunes which befel his country—

> ——— "That chance
> Were in good time, if it befel thee now.
> Would so it were, since it must needs befal!
> For, as time wears me, I shall grieve the more ‡."

The dismal lucubrations of modern philosophers and poets can only inspire the idea of a gloomy consistory, composed of persons who, in their disdain of the holy

* Epist. ad Corinth. II. 7. † Aristoph. Acharnensis.
‡ Hell, XXVI.

discipline, sit, like Michol, full of scorn and sorrow*, disfigured, more than can befal spirit of happy sort.

Alas! if men in ages of faith could, in a dream, have been brought, in presence of this present intellectual world, after searching with fixed ken, to know what place it was wherein they stood, they might have supposed themselves for certain on the brink of the lamentable vale—the dread abyss, that joins a thundrous sound of plaints innumerable. Dark, and deep, and thick with clouds o'erspread, their eyes might in vain have sought to explore its bottom, but would have discerned nought. What bitterness is expressed in that exclamation—

> "There are words of deeper sorrow
> Than the wail above the dead!"

What approximation to despair in that avowal of hope being subject to contingency, when it is said—

> "Circumstance, that unspiritual god
> And miscreator, makes and helps along
> Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
> Whose touch turns hope to dust, the dust we all have trod†."

What a contrast to the bright visions which cheer the way of those on earth who afterwards are blessed, when the poet says—

> ——— "Standing thus by thee
> Other days come back on me
> With recollected music, though the tone
> Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
> Of dying thunder on the distant wind."

Such is the revelation which the modern poet and modern philosopher continually makes of the state of his own heart; and is it for such men to shrink from consulting the history of the ages of faith through fear of its inspiring them with melancholy? Alas! what deeper gloom can come upon this poor soul than that which already encompasses it?

> "Dost thou not hear how pitiful his moan,
> Nor mark the death which, in the torrent flood,
> Swoln mightier than a sea, him struggling holds‡."

* Dante, Purg. X. † Manfred, IV. ‡ Hell, II.

Thus do these tender and elevated souls move along, thirsty, wandering, like those shades deprived of sepulture, and condemned to an eternal restlessness. They can find no place of repose or refreshment in the sterile desert of the world; they sigh, without ceasing, for some, I know not what, mysterious power, which they call liberty or progress, humanity or reason, a kind of liberating divinity, who they think must eventually prevail, and it is with this vain hope that they seek to console themselves.

The Catholic poet, in ages of faith, trained to communion with the holy, assiduous at the early sacrifice, and accustomed to walk unnoticed amidst the evening crowd of faithful which surrounds the divine altars to receive a benediction, hoped hereafter, in a future world, to consort for ever with the saintly spirits he had seen on earth, and to join the choir which keeps eternal festival in heaven: the genius of his song was that of one who is happy—who has no morbid peculiarities of thought or temper. The modern poet, nursed only amidst the wild and lonely scenes of nature, and familiar rather with the howl of winds, and the fall of mountain torrents, than with the hymn of saintly fervour, whose soul hath only known the sublime but sad delight of gazing on pathless glen and mountain high—

> "Listing where from the cliffs the torrents thrown,
> Mingle their echo with the eagle's cry;"

though, having often felt how that sad loneliness loaded his heart, and how that barren desert tired his eye, when he would have wished to trace something that showed of life, though low and mean, yet, for the future, has no brighter hope, while gazing upon the ocean flood, but that it will be a pleasant thing to die—

> "To be resolved into the elemental wave,
> Or take his portion with the winds that rave."

Such was the spirit of the chorus of Æschylus—

> "Oh! that I could as smoke arise
> That rolls its black wreaths thro' the air,
> Mix with the clouds, that o'er their skies
> Show their bright forms, and disappear;

Or, like the dust, be tost
By ev'ry sportive wind, till all be lost * !"

And such is the spirit of the king of modern poets, in that most inhuman aspiration :

——————— "I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshy chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain,
Of ocean or the stars mingle, and not in vain †."

The testimony of Palinurus, indeed, who had experience of this kind of dissolution, might have sufficed to show them how delusive were such anticipations.

"Nunc me fluctus habet, versantque in littore venti,
Eripe me his, invicte, malis———— ‡."

The genius of melancholy must not be confounded with the melancholy of genius; but to the latter it is only the ages of faith that can lay claim. The former, the burden of Babylon, has been the lot of humanity in every period of the world's history, from the time when sin with vanity had filled the works of men. To this fact there is express testimony in all ages; although, without doubt, many of these mourners from the effect of anticipations, having a certain infinite evil in life, might, like Niobe, have been imagined turned to stone on account of eternal silence in affliction—voiceless because so profound, of whom the Book of God affirmeth that he had stricken them but they had not sorrowed, that is, had not confessed their sorrow, yet had he brought down their heart through heaviness; for to walk sorrowful all the day long is the state of sin.

William Schlegel observes, that the conduct of the greatest portion of mankind who live confined within the monotonous circle of little insignificant occupations, can only be accounted for by the necessity which they feel for endeavouring to escape from that secret discontent which

* Supplices. † Childe Harold, III. ‡ Æneid. VI. 362.

presses them down, as soon as the passions of their youth which made their life run like a rapid torrent, have become weak and motionless. Therefore these means of distraction are employed, which are all designed to put in motion their slumbering faculties, by offering to them light difficulties. O Christ! how deep and bitter is the mourning of these men when they say with Montaigne, I have seen the verdure, and the flowers, and the fruit of life, and now I behold the withering, the sear and yellow leaf; or, with Philolaches in the old play, "my heart bleeds when I consider what I am and what I was; that formerly no youth excelled more in gymnastic art, in throwing the quoit, the spear, and the ball, in the course in the field, and that now I am nothing*." This mourning sounds like the lugubrious cry of the birds of night, not the sighs of the dove which represent the blessed mourning, and than which nothing is more calculated to inspire peace, recollection, and internal joy. The world's children professedly indeed pursue a life of pleasure and festivity, but if we can credit one who knew them well, their "mirth hath less of play than bitterness."

> "For many a stoic eye and aspect stern,
> Mark hearts where grief hath nought to learn;
> And many a withering thought lies hid, not lost,
> In smiles that least befit who wear them most †."

Truly when there is a penetrating eye this reflection will be often suggested. The laugh of pleasure's children may remind one of that inhuman saying of the heathen Demænetus, "may all that wish me evil laugh so!"

Such mourning was a thing impossible to mix with blessedness. Nay, with spirits under its influence, as Shakspeare says in Hamlet, the devil is very potent, making use of those phantoms and images of memory, which, according to Aristotle ‡, melancholy persons are most apt to discern, in order to abuse and damn them. These are they who do violence to themselves and to their own blessings, wasting their talents in reckless lavishment and sorrowing there, where they should dwell in joy §; wearing their days in wilful woe, and despising the grace of

* Plautus Mostellaria, 1, 2.
† Byron.
‡ Περὶ αἰσθησέως.
§ Dante Hell, XI.

their Creator, sitting like the Harpies in the Hell of Dante, and wailing o'er the drear mystic wood; whose melancholy springs from no other source, as ancient writers well have shown, but the passions which they have not learned in their youth to master *. This is the mourning which mixes with the inextinguishable laughter of the suitors of Penelope, of whom Homer says, that while revelling with great triumph on the eve of their destruction, though shouts of merriment resounded through the hall, yet at intervals their eyes were filled with tears and their minds with sorrow:

——— ὅσσε δ' ἄρα σφέων
δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο· γόον δ' ὠΐετο θυμός·

Theoclymenus regards this as an omen, and predicts their destruction. Thus all mourning, all poetic melancholy, is not the presage of a blessed end.

Beati qui lugent. But not those who mourn with the world, or who weep through vanity at feigned misery. St. Augustin knocked his breast for having wept on reading the death of Dido in Virgil, who slew herself on being abandoned by her lover Æneas; because he knew well that such tears were without any emotion of charity, and consequently that they were not in any degree agreeable to God, who demands from us only tears of love, in confirmation of which judgment the world itself can be adduced in evidence, for its poets affirm that the wretched are malevolent and envious.

"Est miserorum, ut malevolentes sint atque invideant bonis †."

far, indeed, then is such mourning from the blessing promised. It is the sorrow which dwells for ever upon the cursed strand that every man must pass who fears not God. Let us move onward, for faith has no entrance here.

* Christine di Pisan, Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage Roy Charles V. chap. x.

† Plautus Capteivei, III. 4.

CHAPTER II.

Now we are arrived at the point where our inquiries must return to the domain of history in order to ascertain what was the character of mourning during the ages of faith, and how far the woe of the human heart was affected by the supernatural condition of man's life in relation to the knowledge conveyed in the mysteries of religion. In the first place then a retrospect of Christian history will prove, that the mourning commended from the mountain was understood to be something very different from the spirit which we have been observing—the mourning of animal men, the mourning of Babylon, without charity and without peace. Sooth, to hear the admonitions of those whose writings influenced mankind during the ages of faith, and to mark their countenances as described so graphically in ancient books, one might at first suppose that the blessing had not been pronounced in their estimation upon the state of mourners; but upon that of those who always rejoiced, and who, like the followers of old Pythagoras, considered sadness a vice and a disgrace to be hidden from the eyes of men, for if it ever came upon a Pythagorean, he was to withdraw himself from all observation, and set about removing it by using the remedies prescribed by his discipline, remedies which indeed could hardly have been efficacious, but the recourse to which proves the just abhorrence in which melancholy was held. What was the character of mourning during the ages of faith? Truly one may feel at a loss how to answer this question; for the first impressions consequent upon a study of their history, as far as it is comprised in the thoughts, and doctrines, and manners of men, would lead us to conclude, that the race of mourners had disappeared; and that within the promised land, nothing was ever found but smiles and joy. Where shall we look for mourners? We may conceive at once that the task is difficult; for how can there be melancholy where the Catholic religion sways, which ever invigorates men with hope that leads to blissful end? How great is that hope, and how it doth flourish in them, even its adversaries

admit; for the only question with them, they say, is to account for the exemption of Catholics from despair and trouble of mind*? Hope excludes sadness, and the church militant hath in every age armed all her sons with hope. Let us, however, investigate more narrowly.

Burton, who wrote a professed treatise upon melancholy, would direct us to the abodes of monks and friars, as being men whom he affirms to be continually under its dreadful influence. But lo! the fact is so contrary to his representation, that cheerfulness appears as one of the first results from entering the pleasant cloister's pale. "Do you see these novices?" asks St. Bernard, "they are but just come, but just converted. What appears in them is only a flower, for the season of fruit is not yet arrived. This new conversation is a flower. They assume a face of discipline and a good composition of their whole body. I grant that what appears is pleasing—that greater negligence of exterior dress—fewer words—a more joyful countenance—a more bashful look; yet these are but flowers, and rather the promise of fruit than fruit itself†." Does length of time, think you, and a progress in that course of perfect life, produce a change in this respect? Hear what instructions and doctrines belonged to the monastic discipline. "The Holy Ghost cannot suffer the odious sadness of the children of the world to remain in the soul of his servants." He who thus speaks is the monk who wrote that discourse to a nun which is commonly ascribed to St. Bernard. "Let a spiritual joy remain always within you as a testimony that you are at peace with God. This innocent and tranquil joy is an assured mark of virtue and an earnest of sanctity. If it were not so, David would not have said, rejoice ye just in the Lord and leap for joy."—"There is even a joy natural but innocent, which is a gift of heaven; a precious fruit of peace with God," says the holy Capuchin friar Lombez, in his treatise on the joy of the soul. "You destroy the divine image in your soul by sadness," he continues, "God is joy ‡. 'Servite Domino in lætitia.' All nature rejoices in its Creator, and would you remain in a sad silence? The saints are always full of joy and

* Burton Anat. of Mel. III. 4.

† S. Bernardi super Cantica Serm. LXIII.

‡ Traité de la joie de l'ame, 2. 4.

cheerfulness; in the midst of vast deserts and solitudes, under persecution and suffering, joy is on their countenances. It is joy which makes the heart fear God. 'Lætetur cor meum, ut timeat nomen tuum *.'"

John, the monk of Cluni, in his life of St. Odo, the second abbot of that house, says, "His words were always full of rejoicing; insomuch, that he used to constrain us, through excess of joy, to laugh, which mirth he would moderate with admonitions; but his spiritual cheerfulness diffused internal joy through our hearts. Not being allowed to testify our feelings openly, we used secretly to kiss his vestments †." But this is an investigation which may be terminated without waiting to consult history; for, if in the present age, the manners and countenance of the religious in monasteries bespeak invariably the sweet influence of constant internal rejoicing; and no other inference is possible, after observing them, there can be no danger of error in concluding that it was the same in the ages of greatest faith; for then the world was more frequently opposed by forms of attraction, and consequently there were fewer obstacles to the peace and joy which religion can impart to men.

Will the moderns look for sadness in the air of those pilgrims, who are the objects of so much of their pity? Let them refer to the portrait of one who was a saint, a model and example of all pilgrims. St. Wilfrid, afterwards Bishop of York, made a pilgrimage to Rome, and it is expressly related, that on the way he was to all men affable, and that he never contracted a sad countenance ‡."

If they repair to the solitary hermit's dwelling in the woods and caves of the rocks, they will not have better success. Sebastian Francus Von Word, in the third part of his Chronicle, expressly testifies of the holy hermit Nicolas Von der Flue, that he was never melancholy, but always joyous. But surely it will be said, we cannot be at a loss for examples of sadness, if we turn to the solemn Doctors and Holy Fathers of the Church, who spent their lives in the defence and illustration of the Christian faith? The very aspect of their volumes denotes men abandoned to the gloom of interminable toil. Truly the difficulty remains the same as before. St.

* Ps. 85. † Bibliotheca Cluniacensis 33.

‡ Mabillon, Acta S. Ordinis Bened. Sæc. IV. Pars. 1.

Gregory reckons sadness among the seven capital sins *. St. Chrysostom's chief object in writing to Olympias, the deaconess, is to extirpate the melancholy to which she had been unhappily a prey. "Not only do I wish to deliver you from sadness, but also to fill your soul with a pure and never-ending joy;" it is thus he writes to her. "Sadness," he continues, "is the most intolerable torment of the soul,—a grief beyond all expression,—a punishment more cruel than all punishments. It is like a worm, which gnaws not only our body, but whatever is most intimate within us. It is a night never-ending, a horrible tempest, a fever which consumes secretly. To those seized with it, the sun, the air, however pure, the most beautiful azure of the sky, become a burden, and the day becomes night; which made the prophet say, 'The sun shall set for them at mid-day †.' No, the deep shades of night are not deeper than those of sadness, horrible night, insupportable night, night sinistrous and threatening, refusing to yield to those who would dispel it, but attaching itself to the soul which it has once seized upon, and never letting go its hold until this soul chooses to make use of its wisdom to escape from its power." You have heard how they speak. Nor is the result different if we refer to those ecclesiastical canons, which, from their title at least, might lead one to think that they had relation unto mourning. In the ancient Penitential of Angers, which happens to present itself first to my view, I find reckoned among the capital crimes "the sadness of the world, worldly sorrow." Not even the ascetic discipline will yield us any different result; for universally it rested upon the principle of that sacred text—"Piety will fill the heart with a joyous spirit and with gladness ‡." "Sadness proceedeth from self-love; and joy from the love of God." So we read in the Meditations for the English College at Lisbon: "The fruit is like the tree; that is, the joy is like to the love whence it proceedeth: true love is like to the thing loved; that is, like to God: and hence true joy must be like to God; that is, immortal, most copious, most beauteous, and most sweet §." The Church herself, in her

* C. XXXI. Lib XXXI. in Exod. † Amos viii. 9.
‡ Eccles. i. 18. § Part IV. c. 2.

solemn offices, prays to be delivered from present sadness, and to be conducted to the possession of eternal joy. That faithful spouse of Jesus Christ never mourns long without returning to the expressions of transport. Thus, in the middle of Lent, she changes the penitential tones to sing Lætare Jerusalem; and, in a similar manner, she interrupts the solemn chaunts of Advent to sing Gaudete. What is very remarkable too, the world itself, if considered in reference to the scenes of chivalrous life, seems, during these ages, to have ceased to favour the melancholy which is its natural companion; so that its maxims were directed to the same end as those of the spiritual society, and its ways delivered from all horrid exhibitions of desperate woe. If you will hear fable, which, at that epoch, peculiarly borrowed its language from living manners, you will find King Pharamond, in Gyron le Courtois, reproving Messire du Lac, for indulging in a sorrow which was unbecoming. "Se Dieu me sault si bon chevalier comme vous estes ne deveroit mye trop penser pour nulle avanture de ce monde. Et certes vous pensez orendroit plus que a preudhomme ne convient."—"Sire, (replied Messire du Lac) mon cueur si est seigneur de moy, mais je ne suis mye seigneur de luy *." You will hear the hermit Peter reproving the vain grief of Tancred on the death of Clorinda, as offending against the spirit of his order:

"His vanity with grave advice reproved,
And told what mourning Christian knights behoved.
O Tancred, Tancred! how far different
From thy beginnings good these follies be!
Thou dost refuse of Heav'n the proffer'd grace,
And 'gainst it still rebel with sinful ire;
O wretch! O whither doth thy rage thee chase?
Refrain thy grief, bridle thy fond desire;
At hell's wide gate vain sorrow doth thee place.
Sorrow, misfortune's son, despair's foul sire:
O see thine ill, thy plaint and woe refrain,
The guides to death, to hell, and endless pain †."

During the middle ages, rare was the crime of Piero delle Vigne, who, when his glad honours changed to bitter woes, with soul disdainful and disgusted, sought

* F. LXXXVIII. † Jerus. Deliv. XII. 86.

refuge in death from scorn, and became, just as he was, unjust toward himself. It was so rare, that men considered it in the light of a prodigy. Peter Damien mentions that Hugo, abbot of Cluny, used to relate to him a strange example of a certain stranger, who destroyed himself through the impulse of the demon. "There was a Bishop," he says, "travelling, who came to the banks of a river, where he halted to repose for a short time. As he was resting there, he thought he heard a voice, proceeding as if from the flood, which said, 'Hora venit, homo non venit.' The Bishop shortly after observed a man on horseback, who came galloping to the brink, as if resolved to make his horse plunge into the stream. By the Bishop's directions the attendants, who rushed forwards, succeeded in preventing him, though he persisted in crying out, 'Let me go—I must hasten on the king's errand; an inevitable necessity bids me proceed.' The holy Bishop constrained him to take up his abode with him that night. When every one was sunk in sleep, the stranger plunged his head into a vessel of water which stood in the chamber, and suffocated himself *."

The epoch of the great apostasy of the sixteenth century was distinguished by the frequency of this fearful crime. Petrus Crinitus mentions that in France certain women had lately committed suicide, throwing themselves into rivers, which gave occasion to several learned men to investigate the cause of such a phenomenon, which could only be ascribed to the power of the stars, and to some influence of the air impelling men to madness, and he is obliged to recur to the ancients for similar instances. He mentions, indeed, that a philosopher at Florence, Peter Leonio, and another scholar, deeply versed in Aristotle and Hippocrates, had lately drowned themselves, but it was through an excess of madness, in which they ought to have been bound with chains †.

What, then, becomes of our project, to illustrate the manners of the blessed race from the history and learning of the ages of faith, if on the one hand we are told, by the voice of unerring wisdom, that they who mourn

* Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 438.

† De Honesta Disciplina, Lib. III. c. 9.

are blessed; and on the other, if we can find no trace or sanction of mourning in the ages when we suppose faith to have principally flourished? Softly, my gentle comrade; all is not yet seen: we have as yet been confronted only with the mourning of the world: and how should it be wonderful, or a source of inquietude, that we should have met with no trace of such a spirit in the manners or discipline of those who had renounced the world, during ages of faith? It has not been demonstrated, that the third blessed sentence from the Mount fell a powerless sound upon the ear of the humble and the meek, or that it found nothing in their character or existence to which it was applicable. They were cheerful and full of joyful peace: but it does not follow that they were deprived of the third beatitude: they did not mourn with the world; but we must not infer that they rejoiced with it. Neither earthly sorrow nor earthly joy, in the perverted sense of that expression, belonged to them, but the mourning of holy exiles, resting in this Inn of grief, the sighs of the innocent dove, longing after its home and country, were no less characteristic of their whole existence than were the peace and joy of renovated and spiritualized creatures restored to the favour of their Creator, and destined to dwell hereafter in everlasting gladness. It is not to be imagined for an instant that their cheerfulness bore any resemblance to the disposition of those persons whose lips seem always moved to laughter, or to provoking it in others. Though totally free from that Jansenian gloom, which pervades the thoughts of a celebrated philosopher of later times, there was nothing vulgar or ignoble in their sweet and joyous serenity: it would lead no one to conceive that they could ever inwardly breathe a prayer like that of the parasite of Plautus: "Grant me riches, praise, profit, play, mirth, festivity, feasting, pomp, pleasure, revelling, satiety, joy *:" but it might remind one of the tone of those solemn quires described by Dante,—

——— "and lo!
A sound of weeping and a song: 'My lips,
O Lord!' and these so mingled, it gave birth
To pleasure and to pain †."

* Capteivei, IV. 1. † Purg. XXIII.

Even the ancient sages, who, like the Pythagoreans, declared open war against melancholy, would not have approved of the former temper: they indeed pretended to possess divine remedies against the wounds of sadness *! and Aristoxenus affirmed that they used to refrain from all lamentations and tears; but as a general and pervading tone, they would have rejected utterly and with scorn the pert and nimble spirit of mirth, at least as it appears in the common laugher. Socrates, showing that at the last the souls of men will correspond in appearance to their character in life, says that Thersites will be seen in the form of an ape †. "It may be well," says the Athenian in Plato, "to make oneself acquainted with things ridiculous, in order that one may the better learn what is opposed to them; but it is not possible to practise both, and partake in the least degree of virtue ‡." Plato would not allow the inextinguishable laughter of the Homeric gods even among the men of his republic. *Ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ φιλογέλωτάς γε δεῖ εἶναι. οὔτε ἄρα ἀνθρώπους ἀξίους λόγου κρατουμένους ὑπὸ γέλωτος ἄν τις ποιῇ ἀποδεκτέον* §. While on earth, heroes of his type bore that countenance which Dante ascribes to those four mighty spirits which he beheld within the awful porch, which were of semblance neither sorrowful nor glad ||. The sweet countenance of blessed spirits, bespoke, no doubt, an abundant felicity; but still, it indicated the constant exercise of mystic joy, tempering the sweet with bitter. "The joy of the just," says Drexelius, "is not that of the gay and frivolous, occupied with Saturnalian festivities and Bacchanalian orgies." "Placidum et occultum illud gaudium est, et cum gravitate, imo severitate conjunctum ¶." Thus St. Jerome describes that perfect priest, Nepotianus—"Gravitatem morum hilaritate frontis temperabat **." In the restored and sanctified nature was discernible, to the more instructed and penetrating eye, a mourning that may be termed natural, inasmuch as, although nature was repaired and assisted in them, it was not unmade or condemned ut-

* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. vita, cap. 15, 16. 31.
† De Repub. Lib. X.
‡ De Legibus, Lib. VII.
§ De Repub. Lib. III.
|| Hell. IV.
¶ De Conformit. Voluntat. Hum. cum Div. Lib. III. 2.
** Epist. xxxv.

terly in any of its principles as false and vicious. There was discernible also the mourning of wisdom, the mourning of love, the mourning of piety, the mourning of penitents, the mourning of exiles, who had to meet death before they could reach their country. On each of these points, with history and the learning of the ages of faith for our guide, let us briefly dwell. And first, what is to be said respecting this natural mourning, distinct from the mourning of mere animals of earth, and yet which, in some respects, was of it, since it grew out of the relations and circumstances of the present existence? It would be difficult to find words more exact and beautiful to describe it than those which the Church uses, in that sublime prayer of preparation offered by the priest, when he confesses his unworthiness to discharge so holy an office, and beseeches God that his sins may not be the means of rendering the great sacrifice unprofitable to others: "for, O Lord," he adds, "I bear if thou vouchsafest to behold favourably, the tribulations of the people, the perils of nations, the groans of captives, the miseries of orphans, the necessities of those that travel, the wants of the weak, the despair of the languid, the defects of old men, the sighs of youths, the vows of virgins, the lamentations of widows."

Such is the view of the state of humanity which the Church presents to her minister when she supposes him about to celebrate her consoling mysteries; and it does not appear that philosophers or poets, during the middle ages, were inclined to take a different, even in their lightest compositions. Gouget remarks of the celebrated poet, Alain Chartier, that he alludes to the calamities of life, even in those pieces which he seemed at first intending to consecrate to joy alone. Thus one of them concludes:—

"Adieu chansons que voulentiers chantoye
Et joyeulx dicts où je me delectoye
Tel rit joyeulx, qui après dolent pleure
Rien ne m est bon, n' autre bien n' assaveure
Fors seulement l' attente que je meure;
Et me tarde que briefment viengne l'heure
Qu' après ma mort en Paradis la voye *."

* Bibliotheque Francaise, Tom. IX. 164.

"Grief" prompted him, as he says, to write his most considerable work in prose, which is entitled "Hope, or the Consolation of the three Virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity."

—— "Par douleur ay commencé ce livre
Je souloye ma jeunesse acquitter
A joyeuses escriptures dicter.
Or me convient autre chose tissir,
De cueur dolent ne pouroit joye yssir."

Under a joyous title, we are often presented with serious meditations, as in the work entitled Le Passetems de tout homme et de toute femme, composed by Brother Guillaume Alexis, commonly called the good monk of Lire, an abbey in Normandy. The pastime alluded to proves to be nothing else but the miseries belonging to the human condition. The author follows man from his cradle to his death-bed, and shows that, in every stage of his course, he is called to suffer *. Such strains used to echo under the chivalrous halls of our ancestors, even at the festal hour: for perfectly in character with them was that simple lay of Albert Graeme in Branksome Tower, when he sung of the English lady bright, that would marry the knight of Scotland.—

"Blithely they saw the rising sun
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though love was still the lord of all."

Do you mark how they correspond with the religious view of life?

"They touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe."

Indeed, this view of man's condition corresponds with Nature in her noblest estate; for they whose spirits seem most elastic, cheerful, and buoyant, by a certain apparent contradiction in their structure, are always fond of what is solemn, and of lingering amidst the tombs. And hence, to such minds, the charm of the Catholic religion, which is at one time joyous as the lark singing

* Massieu, Hist. de la Poesie Française, 305.

at heaven's gates beneath the morning cloud; and at another, solemn as the sound of the distant bell, or of the waving grove under the wind of night: while Protestantism is always sad or always dissipated. The spirit of Catholicism is in harmony with that of a genuine drama, which is tragic and yet infinitely mild,—a mixture of joy and sorrow. What means the Church in bidding the priest to bear in mind the sighs of youths? It is that she has deeply observed nature; for youth the most joyous season in life,—is that in which men are enamoured with seeing sad pageants of men's miseries, with tales of woe,—and when they take more delight in weeping than in words; when, according to Shakspeare, they are sad as night, only from wantonness. As if they who were most capable of enjoying the rich banquet of life, found a pleasure all the while in knowing that, even on such an earth as this, they were in a world of woe. As poor Duncan says, "Their plenteous joys, wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves in drops of sorrow." The poet's child is one who has, like Wilfred,

> "A heart too soft, from early life,
> To hold with Fortune needful strife;
> Hour after hour who loved to pore
> On Shakspeare's rich and varied lore,
> But turn'd from martial scenes and light,
> From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
> To ponder Jacques' moral strain,
> And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;
> And weep himself to soft repose
> O'er gentle Desdemona's woes *."

It is one who might say of himself to Ossian, in the words of Delamartine, "My heart is yet warm with the fire of youth; I have not thy years, but I have already thy sadness." In fact, all passions to which youth is subject, end like a tragedy: as Novalis says, "All defective things to which nature introduces them, end with death. So the philosophy of sensation, of fancy, and of ideas. All poesy, which is to them so dear, has a tragic tenor. All genuine jest, for which they have so true a perception, has a serious foundation †." "In the primitive time of fancy," says Frederick Schlegel, "we find that the elegiac was the predominant tone of poesy, as

* Rokeby. † Novalis Schriften, II. 233.

if a melancholy remembrance of the past godly world, and heroic age, or as a sorrowful echo of the lost paradisiacal innocence and heavenly state; or in a still higher and more general sense, as the forlorn lamentation over the blessed childhood of the whole creation, before the spiritual world had been torn asunder by divisions,—before the beginning of all evil, and the consequent calamities of nature *."

A similar tone may be traced in the poetic compositions which were most passionately loved during the middle ages. Many of those wild and tender chaunts, were sad as the song of Linus, or the melancholy Carian strain on Phrygian flute—sad as the song of Hylas sung at fountains in the Mysian land, or the song of the beautiful Bormus, whose watery death was deplored by the husbandmen of Mariandyne on the flute in the middle of summer. The thoughts of men were then but little occupied with the present in comparison with the past and future; and in this respect, the spirit of the Catholic religion would subject every one to the sneers of such writers as Athenæus, who laughs at Plato, calling him "memory's friend," ὁ τῇ μνημοσύνῃ φίλος. Religion, indeed, expressly recommended the mourning which springs from memory, and, in the beautiful words of St. Augustin, distinguished it from the sadness of the world. "Let us sit and weep, remembering Sion. For many weep with Babylonian tears, who also rejoice with a Babylonian joy. They rejoice in gain, and they weep for losses; and both are of Babylon. We ought to weep but from remembering Sion. The waters of Babylon flow and pass. Let us weep by them, but beware how we enter them, lest we should be borne away and swallowed up in them. Let us sit by them and weep; and we shall weep if we remember Sion. O that peace which we shall see with God! O that peace and holy equality of angels! O that beautiful spectacle, that transcendant vision †!"

Music, poetry, and painting, during the ages of faith, seem only the expression of desire, of longing; and if any should adopt the opinion of Winkelman respecting the effects of such melancholy which he ascribes to the

* Philosophie der Sprache, 123.

† S. Augustini Tractat. in Psalm. cxxxvi.

Etrurians, and by which he attempts to account for their not having surpassed mediocrity in the fine arts, and should, on the same grounds, deny that our ancestors could have possessed the soft emotion which renders the spirit perfectly susceptible of the beautiful, I would refer him to the reply which is made by Pignotti, in his "History of Tuscany," where he observes, "That the acute and deep sensations which Winkelman acknowledges belong to the melancholy disposition, are so far from being, as he pretends, incompatible, that they are, on the contrary, inseparably connected with a lively imagination, the first origin of the fine arts, and that melancholy and religious compassion characterize the greatest masterpieces which enrich the Vatican. To the deep humanity of the Catholic religion belonged necessarily the melancholy of compassion for the natural calamities of man. That sorrow, to which kings would bow, was a worthy cause for defiling the serenest eye. Every cloister and every castle had its tale, that had made mourn both wise and simple; for, however calamitous, all events were to be related, that none of the gifts of Heaven might be concealed from men. And now, if I were to select examples from the chronicles of the middle ages, "Methinks," as Homer says, "the light of the sun would set upon our weeping." Lionel Woodville, Bishop of Salisbury, died through sorrow and pity for the fate of others. This member of an illustrious and unhappy family, was brother to Edward the Fourth's queen, the most unfortunate in English history. His own fortunes, being a Churchman, were not overthrown in the wreck of that family; but when Buckingham, who had married one of his sisters, was beheaded in the market-place of Salisbury, the Bishop did not long survive the grief of this last affliction. Life was full of lamentations, which found an echo in hearts, which only had more concern for others, from having renounced self-love. Who knows not these things?—who has not pity?—would be the language of those who might "feel themselves," as Dante says, "on all sides well squared to fortune's blows."

"Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora."

We shall see, in a future place, that this was not a sterile compassion; but it will serve, at present, to explain why, even from natural causes, the noblest spirits,

during the ages of faith, appeared in the character of mourners; and that they did so, we have the express attestation of history. "He was of a melancholy turn of mind," says Fontenelle, of the great Pierre Corneille; and, speaking of John de Medicis, Machiavel says, "Though there was a little melancholy in his disposition, he knew how to please in conversation *." "Rarò quidem lætus," says Petrarch, describing the state of his own mind during the course of his correspondence with Socrates, "mœstus sæpe †." Le Banni de Liesse was the title assumed by John Meschinot sieur de Mortieres, a French poet, contemporary of Chastellain, to express his affliction for the misfortunes of the dukes of Bretagne ‡. Antonio Fulgoso, that noble poet of Genoa, was surnamed Fileremo, on account of his fondness for seclusion; and Hugues Salel, in the reign of Francis I., in his poem "On the Misery and Inconstancy of Human Life," lays it down as a maxim, that we should often choose mournful subjects for contemplation, because long continued joy becomes wearisome §. It is questionable, whether Shakspeare meant to convey a censure when he speaks of one "so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth." Triste et pensif, was the device adopted by Michael Marot; and the same tone of melancholy which Charles Duke of Orleans ascribes to himself, in that affecting poem, which begins—

> "Laissez moy penser à mon aise;
> Helas! donnez m'en le loisir—"

and which seemed so constant an attendant on pre-eminence, that every man in high honour seemed, in his very countenance, to proclaim the justice of S. Bonaventure's exclamation, "Quis in honore sine dolore esse poterit?" That tone is spoken of by Fenelon, in describing James III. of England, as something full of dignity and meekness: he terms it, "Son sérieux doux et complaisant ||." Dante had no need to paint from his imagination in that

* Hist. of Florence, lib. iv.
† Præf. in Epist. Pam.
‡ Gouget Bibliotheque Français, IX. 404.
§ Gouget Bibliotheque Français, Tom. XII. 8.
|| Epitres de Fenelon, 103.

affecting description of one spirit that he meets in purgatory—

> "Behold that lofty shade, who this way tends,
> And seems too woe-begone to drop a tear,
> How yet the regal aspect he retains *."

If these few instances are not sufficient to show the general character of noble minds, in this respect, during the middle ages, it will be easy for any one to multiply them, by referring to our ancient literature, which supplies similar portraits at almost every page. This melancholy of Catholics during ages of faith, whether considered as the melancholy of genius, of honour, of compassion, of love, or of piety, had a distinctive character, which totally separated it from the gloom of heathen or modern times. It was the melancholy recommended by the Apostle, "quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes:" it was without malice, rancour, pusillanimity, despair, tepidity, or wandering of mind; and, therefore, it was not involved in the condemnation passed by holy men, like the Abbot Raban Maur, though that were directed against melancholy †. The necessity for human suffering, so obvious to reason, that the Pythagoreans used to say, "Men ought to welcome punishment, since they came into the world only in order to be punished ‡," is involved in the mystery of the fall; and during ages of faith, the light affliction which arose from it, for a moment, was received by mourners with pious resignation. Let us hear them speak of it, that we may understand what a deep sense they entertained of this mystery. The Master of the Sentences, in laying down a threefold liberty, observes, that the last which he terms the liberty from misery can only be obtained in the future beatitude §. Hugo de St. Victor wrote a treatise, entitled, "Cur flet qui gaudet," alluding to the joy of the Church, which, in this valley of tears, is never without weeping; and the holy Fathers teach, that the perfect prayer is mixed with joy and sadness. "The sweetness of honey," says St. Jerome, "was to be tempered by art before it could be offered in sacri-

* Purg. XVIII.
† Rabani Mauri de Institutione Clericorum, lib. iii. cap. 38.
‡ Jamblich. de Pathagoric. vita, cap. 18.
§ Petri Lombardi. lib. xi. Distinct. 25.

fice to God, for nothing voluptuous pleases God—nothing which has not in it something of austere truth. The paschal of Christ was to be eaten with bitter herbs *." Nay, even in relation to the mere temporal felicity of man, mark how mysterious a thing is woe. Cardan could attest the fact, which furnishes an axiom in the science of the saints; for, he says, "sine malorum experientia nihil esse dulce homini †." The poet goes further still, where he shows how soon men begin to loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof "a little more than a little is by much too much." Unheeding such refined considerations, men, in the middle ages, were at all times ready to welcome sorrow as a blessed thing; either receiving it in the spirit, and, with the words of S. Lupe, when he saluted Attila, exclaiming, "Salve, flagellum Dei,"—or in reference only to the future compensation which would follow it. If they pretended not to be able to walk erect on the waves of the tribulation of this life, as our Lord walked on the sea, yet, at least, they felt that they could (as St. Augustin says) be borne over them on the wood of the cross, and on the model of Christ crucified. "Scientia sanctorum est," says St. Bernard, "hic temporaliter cruciari, et delectari in æternum ‡." "Lazarus, merely because he bore sadness and affliction with courage, obtained the same abode as the great patriarch, whose life had been one series of the most brilliant actions. I will add to this," continues St. Chrysostom, "one consideration which, from being new and perhaps foreign from the common manner of thinking, is no less true; it is this, that even when we should have accomplished some eminent deed of virtue, if labour, if danger, if misfortune, be not, in some measure, mixed with it, the recompence will not be great. The Scripture does not say, that each one will be recompensed in proportion to his virtuous actions; but rather in proportion to the quantum of adversity which he will have supported. Thus, St. Paul, enumerating the subjects of his glorying, gloried chiefly in his having suffered so much; for, after saying, 'Are they ministers of Jesus Christ? I dare to say it, I am more;' and to prove that he is really superior to them, he does not say, I preached the word of God to so many millions of men;

* S. Hieronymi Epist. XXIII.

† Prudentia Civilis, cap. 4. ‡ Serm. 21. de divers.

but, keeping silence as to his virtues and his other merits, he gives a picture of all the calamities he has endured:—'I have lived in the midst of labours, in prisons, and the rest.' Do you see what sufferings were here, and how many occasions of glorifying. Presently, he adds to these the acts of virtue, and, in enumerating them, he makes us see that still sufferings are to him a more solid title than all the rest, for it is always in the same sense. 'Which of you is sick, and I am not also;' he does not say, and I do not endeavour to heal him; but, and I am not also. 'Which of you is scandalized, and I am not consumed interiorly:' he does not say, and I do not deliver him from the scandal: but, and I do not take share in his pains, and in his sorrow *."—"There is no motive," says St. Gregory Nazianzen, in his letter to Thecla, "more proper to make us courageously endure calamities, and to raise us above the generality of men in affliction, than the remembrance of the promises which we made to God, and the hopes which we conceived when we first embraced the true philosophy. Was it, then, our object to live in abundance and in riches, to taste the vain joys and the insane delights of the world, to strew our path with flowers; or rather, on the contrary, did we not expect tribulations, pains, anguish, and to endure all things in hopes of future good? Ah! it is this last lot, not the former, which we were taught to reckon upon. Let us take care, then, how we violate the covenant that we made with God, by wishing to possess, at the same time, the advantages and the goods of this world, and to preserve the hope of the future. Let us leave our conventions standing, and let us support all the woes of life, in hope of the joys of eternity." Although the whole subject of human suffering was involved in mystery, yet the advantages resulting from it were most clearly discernible with the light of faith. "One single 'thanks be to God!' and 'blessed be God!' uttered in adversity, is of more avail," says Father Avila, "than a thousand thanksgivings in the day of prosperity;" and, therefore, as St. Aloysius Gonzaga used to say, "There is no more evident mark of a man's being a saint, and of the number of the elect, than to behold him of a devout life, and, at the same time, exercised with desolations, sufferings,

* St. Chrysostom, Epist. to Olympias Deaconess.

and tribulations." Ah! how much wiser Job in calamity than Adam in Paradise! The one says, "Sicut Domino placuit ita factum est!" the other, "Vocem tuam audivi et abscondi me*!" But as this will appear still more clearly when we have proceeded further, let it be observed here, that the advantages of suffering were not altogether concealed from the ancients, who could only judge by the light of reason. Would you hear the heroic chaunt of the poet, whose lofty muse was to inspire conquerors? O, Son of Philanor! you would have led an obscure life, and have never won a glorious renown, wasting your strength in ignoble contests in your domestic circle, like the cock that conquers in its familiar court, unless banishment, consequent on an insurrection, had driven you from your country—

Εἰ μὴ στάσις ἀντιάνειρα
κνωσίας ἄμερσε πάτρας.

Now you are a glorious victor in the Olympic contest, as well as having received twice the Pythic, and once the Isthmian crown†. Without labours, no one was ever illustrious, nor ever shall be‡. If there be any happiness with men, it does not appear without labour §; but a life void of danger was granted neither to Peleus Æacides, nor to the divine Cadmus, yet they are both said to have obtained the highest felicity of mortals; who both heard the Muses singing in the mountains, and within the seven-gated Thebes; who both entertained the gods with hospitable rites; who both beheld the kingly sons of Saturn on their golden seats, and received from them nuptial gifts||. The lessons of the ancient sage were to the same effect. Socrates speaks of banishment and bad health, as among the few causes which can enable men to pursue philosophy with a true spirit. "There remains, then," saith he, "but a very small number of men consorting with philosophy in a worthy manner; either men who have been punished with exile, of generous manners, and well educated, through a want of the causes which

* Drexelius de Conformitate Human. Voluntatis cum Divin. lib. iv. 2.

† Pindar, Olymp. XII.

‡ Id. Pyth. Ode V.

§ Id. Pyth Od. XII.

|| Id. Pyth. Od. III.

corrupt, so that the philosophic nature remains in them, or else men whom the bridle of our dear friend Theages is able to restrain; for Theages is surrounded, and furnished on all sides with things sufficient to make him fall from philosophy," such as riches, friends, honours, &c.; "but the continual suffering of his body from bad health, restrains him from political affairs and corruptions*." Poets might have found examples in their own walk to justify a similar conclusion respecting what the child of the muses ought to desire. The ancients had instances before them, like that of Dante, who finished his sublime work while in exile, wandering and unhappy, through the different states of Italy.

The disputants in Plato's VIIth Book on Laws, agree in the opinion that the right and most happy life takes a middle course between pleasure and grief, neither pursuing the former nor avoiding the latter, but desiring the medium; and that all men should fly from the life of unmingled pleasure, as well as that of pain. Aristotle admits, that in sufferings the beautiful may shine forth, when any one bears great calamities with cheerfulness, not through insensibility, but through greatness of mind †. And Plutarch lays it down as a criterion to determine what progress we make in virtue, to see whether we prefer mourning to festivity; or, to use his own words, whether we incline to excess in the Dorian harmony, which is grave and devout, or in the Lydian, which is gay and joyous. With respect to the ideas of the heroic world, if, on the one hand, the Homeric heroes speak of the gods having given them evils, and having ordained such things wishing them evil; on the other, the hero of Sophocles, Polynices, recognizes in his misfortunes the hand of an avenging deity ‡; and Archidamus, the Spartan king, proclaims adversity to be the school of virtue. "Let us not suppose," said he, "that there is any great difference between one man and another; but that he is the best who has been brought up in the greatest necessities §."

Finally, let those who object to the Catholic view of suffering and penance, hear the remarkable words of Plato, explaining in what manner it may be often for the

* Plato de Repub. Lib. VI.
† Ethic. Nic. I. 10.
‡ Œd. Col. 1299.
§ Thucydid. lib. I. c. 84.

eternal advantage of men to choose mortification. "A person," saith he, "acting unjustly and escaping punishment and all suffering on account of his injustice, and congratulating himself upon such exemption, would be more miserable and deluded than a sick person who should rejoice in not undergoing the operation which alone could effect the cure of his body. In fine, the not receiving punishment for evil is the first and greatest of all calamities; so that if rhetorick be of any use to one who is unjust, it can only be by enabling him to expose fully and manfully his own injustice, in order that it may receive the proper punishment, whether of chains, or banishment, or death; that so his soul may be healed in the same manner as he would offer his limb to the knife or fire of the surgeon, in order to have it restored to soundness. Therefore each person should be his own accuser, and should beware of concealing his wickedness, and should employ all his rhetoric to this end, that he may be loosed from the greatest evil of injustice *."

But to return to the phenomena presented in the Christian life, we have observed, that in the restored and sanctified nature, during ages of faith, was discernible, not only this natural mourning from a sense of the sufferings of humanity; but also a mourning which may be termed of wisdom, as if belonging, of necessity, to all peculiar depth and penetration of mind. St. Thomas says, that the third beatitude, or that of tears, answers to the gift of science; implying, that wisdom and philosophy prepare us for sorrow. "The gift of science," says St. Augustin, "brings the third beatitude, beati qui lugent; for it enables men to learn the evils to which they are bound †"

Many philosophers have remarked with Rhasis, that the finest wits and most generous spirits are before others obnoxious to melancholy: "qui sunt subtilis ingenii et multæ perspicacitatis de facile incidunt in melancholiam;" and one ancient author affirms that melancholy advanceth men's conceits more than any humour whatsoever.

The love of wisdom, indeed, is said in the unerring text, to dispel sadness like wine and music ‡; but yet

* Plato Gorgias. † De Serm. Dom. in monte.
‡ Eccles. XL. 20.

we read in the same, that the heart of the wise is where is sadness. In fact, as St. Anselm remarks, "quamvis delectabiles et dulces sint sapientia et dilectio, tamen in hujus vitæ lubrico generant dolorem et amaritudinem aliquando : quæ quanto veriores et majores sunt, tanto hoc faciunt rarius, et tanto gravius *." Albert Durer's celebrated design representing melancholy personified, shows a woman surrounded with the instruments of science, and occupied with its problems. Such was that sage of whom the poet says,

> ——— "His aspirations
> Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
> And they have only taught him what we know,
> That knowledge is not happiness, and science
> But an exchange of ignorance for that
> Which is another kind of ignorance †."

Yet, to the discerning and attentive eye, nature herself seemed to indicate mourning in characters that the wise could read. In some flowers, like that of the bean, Varro says, lugubrious letters are visible, and some suppose that it was on account of them the bean was forbidden food to the Pythagoreans. "Whither goest thou, grief?" say the Spaniards, "where I am wont;" and again they say, "when born I wept, and every day shows why."

"In the nations of the south," says Don Savedra, who could judge from long observation, "the men are melancholy and profound in penetrating the secrets of nature ‡." But so it is with man; and his noble nature, undaunted by the prospect of sorrow, impels him no less to contemplate; and as the poet says, "while the same honour ceases to belong to the flowers of the spring, and the moon shines not with one unchanging countenance, he fatigues his lesser mind with eternal counsels §." Hence, the rapid course of life afflicts the wise man more than others, "for who knows most, him loss of time most grieves." In the middle ages, the term sad was generally applied to every one who made profession of learning; for it was remembered then by all, that wisdom is not found in the land of those who live a sweet life ||.

* S. Anselmi Epist. lib. XI. 50. † Manfred II.
‡ Christian Prince II. 380. § Hor. Carm. lib. II. 11. || Job.

Without any indication of a troubled mind, a student might expect to have been often designated as was Hamlet by his mother: "But look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading." Painters would represent him making of one hand for his cheek a couch, with frequent sighs. Reading in the middle ages was not pursued as a light desultory amusement; it was the food of those thoughts that wander through eternity.

A French writer of great eminence has made the remark, that when nature bestows sublimity of genius, she accompanies it with that condition, "Be a great but an unhappy man." Religion herself held out no other prospect. "False prophets," says St. Jerome, "always promise sweet things, and please for a time. Truth is bitter, and they who preach it are filled with bitterness. In the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, the Pasch of the Lord is celebrated, and it is eaten with bitterness*." Hence the shallow and ignoble sentence that "it is better sometimes to rejoice in error than always to grieve on account of truth." There was observable also, it has been said, the mourning of love; which, as St. Anselm says, "like wisdom not unfrequently generates in the present life bitterness and sorrow." Plato said, that love and melancholy are near relations†. If one might venture to illustrate this theme, renewing the memory or custom of love-tuned song, I know indeed that full many piteous stories do remain from the period of these extraordinary ages when every aspiration of the human heart was often sanctified and pure. But it would be long and out of place to speak of those who, like Tancredie, had no other fault but love; which, by unadvised sight, had been

> "Bred in the dangers of adventurous arms,
> And nurs'd with griefs, with sorrows, woes, and harms."

Since, of such love, it is not fitting here to speak, let us turn to a more fruitful source of mourning during the ages of faith, which will enable us to penetrate far deeper than we have hitherto done into their spirit and genius; for as yet we have but merely touched, as it were, upon the surface, and seen nought but what the history of men at all times might be found to supply.

* Advers. Jovin. Lib. II. † De Repub. Lib. IX.

CHAPTER III.

"O THOU Almighty Father! As angels of their will tender unto thee meet sacrifice, circling thy throne with loud hosannas; so may the offering of theirs be duly made to thee by saintly men on earth;" such was the prayer that rose incessantly to heaven wherever the catholic church had children, and these few words are sufficient to show with what spirit and conduct they regarded and received sorrow. The mourning of piety is a new and abundant theme, which to philosophers themselves, might be presented as one full of interest, and abounding in matter for observation and profound thought. Faith taught men the necessity for mourning, as a means of spiritual purification and of ascent to God. To the eye of faith the state of mourning was therefore a privileged and blessed state; and hence the priest, when about to celebrate the sacred mysteries, on taking the manipule uses this prayer: "Merear, Domine, portare manipulum fletus et doloris, ut cum exultatione recipiam mercedem laboris."

All writers of the spiritual life have shown, that those who are to be united to God must suffer many afflictions, internal as well as external, spiritual as well as sensible, in order that both parts may be perfectly purified; for, without such suffering and crosses, there cannot be the complete union and joy of the blessed *. "The perfect," says St. John of the Cross, "have to pass through the night of the senses, the night of the spirit, the night of the memory, and the night of the will, which four nights represent the four kinds of mortification which they must endure. Because they are accepted of God—temptation must prove them." How wondrously conformable to the dictates of Divine wisdom was that maxim of Pythagoras †, where he said that "conquerors and those on

* St. John of the Cross. The Ascent of Mount Carmel, the obscure night of the soul.

† Porphyrius de Vita Pythagoræ XXXI.

whom leaves are thrown are polluted." Hence, no doubt the phenomenon which has so often elicited the remark which is found in even the ancient poet, that "the wicked are sometimes more fortunate than the good *." What examples were beheld in the calamities which befel St Louis, René of Anjou, Count Elzear de Sabran, St. Elizabeth, Henry VI. of England, many of the popes and other saintly personages during the middle ages. Those arms of the Braschi family, Boreas blowing on the rose, so symbolical of the life of the holy Pope Pius VI., might be adopted as a general emblem of the lot of goodness in this perverse world. The history of St. Francis Xavier furnishes a memorable instance. The king of Japan, who was converted by the preaching of the saint, had enjoyed the utmost prosperity while an idolater. No sooner did he renounce idolatry, and embrace the Christian faith, than it pleased God to visit him with all kinds of calamities. Two months after his baptism, his subjects rose against him and drove him from his throne. When the Gentiles reproached him with having changed his religion, and said that this was the cause of his misfortunes, he made a vow at the foot of the altar to live and die a Christian; adding, "that if all Japan and all Europe, if the fathers of the society and the Pope himself were to renounce Jesus Christ, that he would confess him to the last hour of his life; and that he would be always ready to shed his blood in testimony to his faith †."

Still more remarkable is the answer which St. Theresa made to a devout merchant from whom she had received an alms, and the events which followed in that man's life. "I have recommended you in my prayers as you desired," said she to him, "and it has been revealed to me, that your name is written in the book of life, and as a sign of the truth of what I say, you will never prosper again in your worldly affairs." So it turned out: his ships were successively wrecked and sunk; becoming unable to pay his debts, he was delivered from prison only through the esteem which his creditors entertained for his piety; and being thus stript of all worldly goods, but contented with the grace of God alone, he closed his

* Eurip. Helen. 1213.

† Bouhours, Vie de St. F. Xavier II. 230.

days in the odour of sanctity; thus disproving too the testimony of the Greek poet when he said, that "the soul of the man who was once prosperous, when he falls into calamity, wanders over the past pleasures *." To facts of this kind, however, the holy fathers allude in words that denote how easy it was for men to misunderstand the phenomena. "The winds," say they, "rise upon this ocean; you behold the evil prospering and the good in distress. There is a temptation, there is a flood, and your soul saith, 'O God, God, is this thy justice that the wicked should prosper and that the good should be in distress?' and God will reply to you, "Is this your faith? Is this what I promised to you, or is it for this that you are a Christian, that you should prosper in this world?'"

"Be not astonished," says Louis of Blois, "and murmur not against God. Refer to the scriptures; there you will see how the devil was heard and the apostle not heard? In what manner were the demons heard? They sought leave to enter the swine, and leave was granted to them. The devil sought leave to tempt Job, and he received it. In what manner was the apostle not heard? Thrice he besought the Lord that the cause of his suffering might be taken from him; and his answer was, 'Sufficit tibi gratia mea, nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur.' He heard him whom he intended to condemn, and he heard not him whom he wished to save †."

As far as respects external calamities, reason itself can discern their utility. Heaven has many ways of conferring happiness, and adversity is one of them. This, no doubt, Pindar saw when he sung,

——— Πολλαὶ δ' ὁδοὶ
Σὺν θεοῖς εὐπραγίας ‡.

"It is in the nature of things," says De Haller, "and all history attests it, that a too long enjoyment of the highest fortune contains in itself the seeds of destruction, that by the softness, the luxury, and the indifference which are its usual results, it ends in enervating the most vigorous races, and in extinguishing that force of soul, along with which all other goods of the earth are lost."

* Eurip. Troades, 640.
† Ludovic. Blosii Tractat. in Ps. lxxxv. ‡ Olymp. VIII.

If this was often true in reference even to the interests of the present life, much more frequently was it so with regard to the more important concern of the soul's health and condition for eternity. The deep sense which men entertained of this fact during the ages of faith, has given rise to a tone in their whole literature, which has often struck the modern readers, who are constrained to admire the imperturbable resignation with which the most unforseen and dreadful calamities were endured. The page of history is often suddenly illuminated with bright examples of this kind, which seldom fail to charm even the most insensible: and certainly the contrast which is presented in this respect by our annals to the whole of heathen literature, must excite a surprise not unmixed with the highest pleasure. The ancient poets seem never to have conceived the idea of a spirit of resignation and sacrifice, which would soften and sanctify calamity. Hecuba becomes impious in her misfortune, and says, that to call upon the gods is to invoke evil allies, though it may have a certain form of propriety to appeal to them in misfortune *. In the poet's mind it was impossible that any feeling but that of the utmost horror could be excited in the breast of one who, having been the mother of Hector, might now in her misfortunes and subjection, be doomed to guard the keys of the gate, or to prepare food †. It is easy to see what an advantage the poet of the middle ages would have had here in following the common inspiration of religion. In fact, there is nothing more remarkable in their whole history and literature, than the astonishing change which Christianity had wrought in the hearts and understanding of men with regard to the contemplation or experience of misfortune. "When Fouquet's mother heard of the arrest of her son, she threw herself on her knees," says the Abbé de Choisy, "and raised up her hands to heaven. 'I thank you, O my God,' she cried, 'I have always prayed to you for his salvation, and lo, here is the way opened!'" Catharine, queen of England, used to say, that she would rather have adverse than prosperous fortune, for that the former never wanted consolation; whereas, in the latter, both mind and judgment were often wanting.

* Eurip. Troades, 473. † Ibid. 494.

When the venerable Mother de Chantal came to Moulins, she had much conversation with the Duchess de Montmorency, who was there residing in the convent of the Visitation. The holy woman expressed her joy that the duchess should have made such good use of her misfortunes. "My misfortunes," replied Madame de Montmorency, "have not been the sole cause of my retreat: I have always felt an indifference for the world, even when I was at the court. My misfortunes found me in this disposition, and I have received them as means granted by God, to enable me to fulfil the wish of my early youth, to live in retreat, unknown, and without other care, but that of my salvation. I have endeavoured to place myself in this state, and I have lived now for many years as you see me in this house, hoping that Heaven will have pity upon me *."

The chief of modern bards who, in tales of prose, without a rival stands, has chosen for matter of his song, the wisdom and peace of a blessed mourner contrasted with the sadness of one who judged with the world's mind, where he describes the meeting of Bruce and his royal sister, the Abbess Isabel, in her Convent of St. Bride:

"The Bruce survey'd the humble cell,
And this is thine, poor Isabel!
That pallet-couch, and naked wall,
For room of state, and bed of pall;
For costly robes and jewels rare,
A string of beads and zone of hair;
And for the trumpet's sprightly call
To sport or banquet, grove or hall,
The bell's grim voice divides thy care,
'Twixt hours of penitence and prayer!"

The noble abbess consoles him respecting his past misfortunes, adding,

"And grieve not that on Pleasure's stream,
No more I drive in giddy dream,
For Heaven the erring pilot knew,
And from the gulf the vessel drew.
Tried me with judgments, stern and great,
My house's ruin, thy defeat,

* Marsollier, Vie de Mdme. Chantal II. 1810.

Poor Nigel's death ; till, tamed, I own
My hopes are fix'd on heaven alone ;
Nor e'er shall earthly prospects win
My heart to this vain world of sin."

Finally, she sends her reply to Lord Ronald, who knew not of her having taken the veil—

" This answer be to Ronald given :
The heart he asks is fix'd on heaven.
My love was like a summer-flower,
That wither'd in the wintry hour ;
Born but of vanity and pride,
And with these sunny visions died.
Brother, for little space, farewell !
To other duties warns the bell."

Then follows the lament of the worldly heart—

" Lost to the world, King Robert said,
When he had left the royal maid—
Lost to the world, by lot severe—
Oh ! what a gem lies buried here ;
Nipp'd by misfortune's cruel frost,
The buds of fair affection lost *."

Would you observe the same resignation in the mourning of heroes? When the master of Santiago beheld his forces overwhelmed by the Moors on the mountains of Malaga, his cry was, " O, Lord of Hosts ! from thy wrath do I fly, not from these infidels ; they are but instruments in thy hands, to chastise us for our sins !" " This defeat," says one of the devout historians of Spain, " was to teach them, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that God alone giveth the victory ;" and Father Antonio Agapida asserts it to be a punishment for the avarice of the Spanish warriors, who were intent upon spoil. It is the same spirit in the Saxon Chronicle, where it describes the dreadful pestilence and famine which desolated England in the year 1087, concluding with this reflection. " Alas ! how wretched and how rueful a time was there ! Who is so hard-hearted as not to weep at such misfortunes? Yet such things happen for men's sins,—that they will not love God and justice." While recording the temper

* Lord of the Isles, IV.

and views with which sufferings were borne by St. Louis, by Alfred, and by many other heroic and saintly kings of the middle ages, history is constrained to assume a tone of sanctity which is strangely at variance with its generally profane character. Sometimes the details are very attractive: as those relating to that affecting scene which was presented at the Council of Rheims, in which Pope Innocent presided, and before which St. Bernard preached. Philip, the eldest son of King Louis-le-Gros, had lately met with a tragic death by an accident; and the King was now proceeding to Rheims to have his second son crowned, but the loss of the former had overwhelmed him with affliction. The King, Queen, and young Prince, attended by the Abbot Suger, and by the whole court, arrived in that city on the 23d of October. The next day, the King came to the Council, followed by a crowd of nobles, and leaning on the shoulder of Raoul, Count de Vermandois, Grand Senéchal of France, like a man oppressed with sadness; he mounted into the Pope's tribune, and after kissing his feet, sat down in a chair, which was a little lower than that of his Holiness. He spoke of the death of his son in few words, which drew tears from the eyes of all present; at every word he spake his tears flowed fast, and all the bitterness of his heart appeared in his countenance. The Pope replied before the Council—"Great King, you must raise your mind and all your thoughts to the King of kings, to adore his judgments, and receive with perfect submission the events of his Divine Providence. It is he who has placed the Crown of France upon your head; it is by his will that you command this noble and generous nation; but he requires you to believe that every thing occurs by his permission, for it is not a blind divinity which can be ignorant of any thing that passes here below; and though there are often great injustices, these events are always just on his part, and the effects either of his justice or of his mercy. You know, great Prince, that prosperity and adversity are the ordinary means which he employs in conducting his children; and this alternative, which he sheds on the whole course of our life, is an effect of his highest wisdom, in order that man may not attach himself to the figure of this world which passes away, lest, if he were always prosperous, he might forget that this is a place of exile, and that all our vows and desires should

tend to the celestial Jerusalem. We have no secure dwelling in this world: we are only like travellers, who pass on, and who proceed to their country, which is Heaven. Then, all who have lived according to the spirit, and who have mortified their passions, will reign with God, in the possession of eternal happiness. Your son has been taken, while he was yet in simplicity and innocence; and the kingdom of heaven is particularly destined for those whom the corruption of the world hath not infected. Consider how David ceased to mourn as soon as his son was dead, and how he wisely submitted to the ordinance of Heaven. I conjure you, then, to moderate this excessive grief, and to banish this overwhelming sadness, which appears on your countenance, and which arises only from an affliction which is a little too human. Remember that Heaven has left you other sons. It is for you to console us strangers, driven from our country, and become, as it were, wanderers from land to land. You have already done so, in a manner worthy of your piety. You are the first of the Christian Princes to whom we are indebted for hospitality. May Heaven recompense you as you deserve, and crown you with an everlasting happiness, and a happy life, which will be no more subject to death, and a holy joy, which no sorrow shall ever more disturb." With these words, the Pope arose, and absolved the soul of the deceased Prince; and then the Council was adjourned till the next day. The King appeared consoled. The discourse of the Holy Father had made an impression on his understanding and on his heart. He retired, in great peace, to the Abbey of St. Remy, where he had taken up his lodging.

The sages of the cloister kept men mindful of the end for which all human felicity is chequered with sorrow. I remember once, while spending some days in a certain monastery, where I was received with wondrous benignity, that one venerable Father, of great age, used to come to my chamber every evening, when he would converse with me for a short time. "Our sovereign," he said to me one night, "who is beloved by all his subjects as a pious, just, and amiable prince, has no son. Ah! see how the condition of man, in his best estate, has always some dark side, in order to remind him that his true country is not in this world. Again,

with respect to ourselves, what a happy land is our beloved country—what an industrious innocent people! During thirty-seven years that I have lived in this forest, no deed of violence has ever been committed. What a combination of blessings do we enjoy? A wise, humane government; no national debt; no want of freedom; a delicious climate; a fertile soil! Such is our state to-day; but when our sovereign dies,—dies without an heir,—what is to be our fate? This only we know for certain, that bliss may not remain long with mortals,—that here we have no abiding home, that here is nothing secure —nothing durable." To cite instances of misfortune having been the means of conferring great spiritual good, would be an unnecessary task; but yet there is one example in the history of France so remarkable, so associated with themes that should be dear and precious, that I cannot pass on without first attending to it. Pélisson, confined in a dungeon in the Bastile, applied himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, and became convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion. He, and La Fontaine, who was wholly depending upon patronage, were the two young men who came forward to defend Fouquet, the moment he was thrown into prison and proscribed, when all his creatures and all the courtiers abandoned him. Pélisson, from the Bastile, sent forth Discourses in his favour, which have been compared with those of Cicero: he left nothing untried to help his friend—"le premier entre les généreux." Poetry, eloquence, glory, religion, even menaces, were employed to move the king. Perhaps, if it were lawful to indulge in such speculations, it was for this noble virtue, that Pélisson was rewarded by conversion, and La Fontaine by the gift of repentance. The former, from this happy moment, abandoned his former trivial compositions, and wrote no more, excepting for God and for his Church. As he had neither paper, pens, nor ink, he used to cut off little pieces of the lead casement, with which he used to write down his thoughts. While in prison, many learned persons dedicated their works to him. Nothing could disturb the tranquillity of his soul, for mourning had enabled him to view every object from the height of faith. One of his Odes was written during a great storm, in the Bastille:—"Rude and terrible blast, thou only assaultest my prison; while on the sea, how much greater cause of

fear! Celestial faith, whose ardour elevates and inflames me; thou teachest me that this weak body is nothing but the dwelling of my soul. Others may well fear a cruel shipwreck. Rude and terrible blast, thou only assaultest my prison." Another Ode is addressed to the sun:—"I behold thee, O Sun! advancing with royal splendour; but another object, greater than thee, occupies all my thoughts: I feel it; it is in my heart: before it, thy splendid beams grow pale, and thy light resembles a shadow. By it I live; by it thou runnest thy course, and bringest night and day. Depart, O Sun! whither thou art summoned; I have no regard, no discourse, excepting for its immortal light." Again:—"Rise, my soul, above the earth, and above the pride of profane mortals. Contemplate the saints, whose long fervour, imitating the labour of the heavenly Saviour, sustains their spirit with celestial hopes." Again:—"The example of Godeau has inspired me with the desire of consecrating my genius, and my voice to God. I behold a thousand learned men, whose verses have power to reign over kings, and to give to their names a deathless renown. Mortals, who possess this precious gift, too long have ye flattered the princes of the earth; begin, at length, to praise the Monarch of Heaven." Again:—"Sweet nightingales, who return every year to sing in these groves, consecrate your charming voices to the glory of God, who has endowed you with them. Bright flowers of the fresh season! do not present yourselves to my sight—you render the earth too lovely: I wish to love only heaven." Again:—"Double bars, with bolts unnumbered—triple gates, strongly locked, to souls truly wicked, you represent hell!—but to innocent souls, you are only wood, stone, and iron." Upon his deliverance from the Bastile, after some delay, in consequence of hearing of the intended promotion which awaited him, he, at length, embraced the Catholic religion, in the subterraneous church of Chartres, in the year 1670. The same day, he wrote an affecting letter to the King; and on the following, retired to the Abbey of La Trappe, and remained there during ten days, leading the life of a holy anchorite: his piety affected every beholder. Ever afterwards, he was in habits of hearing mass daily,—of receiving the communion on all festivals,—of making frequent retreats,—of delivering some prisoners every year:

he was the father of orphans, and the protector of the weak: he made considerable presents to several churches, chiefly to mark his veneration for the mystery of the eucharist. Amongst others, he gave a silver lamp, weighing two thousand pounds, to the Sisters of the Visitation, to burn night and day before the blessed sacrament. "Happy captivity!" cried Fenelon, alluding to him in the discourse which he pronounced on entering the French Academy, "Happy captivity! salutary bonds! which reduced, under the yoke of faith, this mind, too long independent. During this period of leisure, he sought in tradition for arms to combat truth; but truth conquered him, and revealed itself to his soul, with all its charms. He left his prison, honoured with the esteem and graces of his King; but, what is much more, he left it, being already in his heart a humble child of the Church *."

Of the necessity for mourning in the spiritual life, men were well convinced in the ages of faith; but its source was far deeper and more mysterious than the mere present utility which resulted from it to the soul. "Augustin and Jerome belong to these latter ages of the world," says a philosopher, in casting a glance over the history of the human mind. "One discovers in them an order of ideas, and a manner of thinking, unknown to antiquity. Christianity has made a cord to vibrate in their hearts which till then had been mute. It has created men of revery, of sadness, of disgust, of restlessness, who have no refuge but in eternity."—"The present life is sweet, and full of much pleasure; yet not to all men, but to those only who are attached to it" It is St. Chrysostom who speaks thus:—"For if any one were to look up to heaven, and contemplate what wondrous things are there, immediately he would despise this world, and esteem it of no value. The beauty of bodies, so long as no greater beauty is discerned, excites admiration; but if any thing more ex-

* He wrote "Réflexions sur les Différends de la Religion," which Leibnitz pronounced an admirable work; also, "Traité de l'Eucharistie," in which Bossuet said, "That charity was joined to truth, and that unction was added to light: it contained prayers, which he had composed for use during mass; which are so fine, that Father Judde can find none more suitable to insert in his book of instructions." Tom. III., 330.

cellent were to appear, the former would be despised. And if we should wish to behold that beauty, and to consider the form of the celestial kingdom, we should thenceforth be loosed from the bonds of this world*." "O quam sordet terra," cries a great Saint, "quando cœlum aspicio!" And so says St. Augustin, after conversing with his mother, Monica, at Ostia, on the beatitude of the saints in Heaven, "Mundus iste nobis viluerat cum omnibus delectationibus suis."—"The bonds of this world," he says, in another place, "have a true asperity and a false sweetness, a sure grief, an uncertain pleasure, hard labour, timid rest, things full of misery, and a hope void of happiness †." Thus, "Not alone the creature groaneth and travelleth in pain, but also they who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves, expecting the adoption of the sons of God ‡;" "He who does not mourn as a stranger," says St. Augustin, "will never rejoice as a citizen §." The holy Church, in her prayer to God, says, that his people labour under continual tribulations ‖. Let us proceed to inquire what were these tribulations which faith recognized as the legitimate source of a mourning that is blessed. In the first place, then, we are told, by writers of the middle ages, that when the soul is awakened to a sense of spiritual things, the mere contemplation of its fallen state is a worthy cause for sorrow and for profound mourning. Hear the words of St. Vincentius, in his celebrated tract on the contemplation of God:—"O Lord! thou art my God and my Lord; and I have never seen thee. Thou hast made and restored me, and all that I possess of good, thou hast granted to me, and I have not yet known thee. For seeing thee I was created, and I have not fulfilled that for which I was created. O, miserable lot of man, when he lost that for which he was created! O, hard and dire calamity! Alas! what lost he, and what found he? What departed, and what remained? He lost beatitude, for which he was made; and he found misery, for which he was not made. That departed, without which nothing is happy; and that remained, which, of itself, is only wretchedness. Man used to eat the bread of angels,

* Hom. CC. in Joan. † Epist. 30.
‡ Rom. viii. § Tract. in Ps. 148.
‖ 3d feria, Fourth Week in Lent.

for which he now hungers; and now he eats the bread of sorrow, of which he once knew nothing. Alas! the common grief of men, the universal woe of the children of Adam! Driven from their sweet country, from the pleasant light, from the vision of God, from the bliss of immortality into darkness, and the bitterness and horror of death, amerced of heaven, and from eternal splendours flung *." Hear, again, how St. Bernard speaks, in his first Sermon on the Epiphany:—"The benignity and humanity of God our Saviour hath appeared, thanks be to God, by whom thus abounds our consolation in this pilgrimage, in this exile, in this misery. For this end we are the more careful often to admonish you that you may never forget how you are pilgrims, far removed from your country, driven from your inheritance; for, whoever does not know desolation, cannot acknowledge comfort; whoever is ignorant that consolation is necessary, it remains that he be left without the grace of God. Hence it is that men, who are engaged in the occupations and crimes of the world, while they do not perceive their misery, do not look for mercy. But you, to whom it hath not been said in vain, 'Be still, and see how sweet is the Lord;' and of whom the same Prophet says, 'He will announce the virtue of his works to his people,'—you, I say, whom secular affairs do not detain, are able to know what is spiritual consolation: 'Hearken! you who have known exile, because assistance is come from Heaven: for the benignity and humanity of God our Saviour hath appeared.'"—"There is a certain kind of tribulation," says Louis of Blois, "which we ought to seek and find; that which results from remembering that we are not as yet with God, that we are surrounded with temptations, that we cannot be without fear. He who does not experience this tribulation of his pilgrimage, thinks not about returning to his country †." "The weight of sin," says a holy friar of the Seraphic Order of St. Francis, "is only felt when it is out of its centre. Water and earth are heavy; and yet, when they are in their proper place, they are both without weight. Thus it is with sinners. They are as joyous as if they had never done any thing but served

* Tract. S. Vincentii ad contempl. Deum.
† Tractat. in Ps. 49.

God, and led a life of innocence. The reason is, that sin reposes in them as in its proper element; but let them forsake it, and then they will soon discover that its weight is intolerable *." Reason itself can discern this, as may be seen with Seneca, who puts this difference between the sickness of the body and that of the mind; that with respect to sickness of body, the greater it is the more painful; but in diseases of the mind, the greater they are, the less they are felt and complained of †. Then, indeed, deceitful is the calm, so deceitful the silence, that even a heathen philosopher says, that the guardian angels speak not to all souls; for when men struggle in the waves of the sea, those on the shore behold in silence as many as are at a distance from the land irremediably lost, but run and succour, with their hands and with their cries, as many as are approaching the land; so these ministering spirits suffer in silence such as are sinking afar off in the flood of wickedness, but sustain and guide to a happy port those who are struggling to practise virtue.—That the first recovery from sin is attended by a sense of sorrow, is shown by St. Bernard, in language of wondrous sublimity:—"Lazarus is dead four days, and now stinketh. This answereth," he continues, "to the state of sinners. The first day is that in which we die by sin, and are, as it were, buried in our consciences; the second represents that temptation of evil habits, and those fiery darts of the devil, which can scarcely be extinguished; the third is, while we meditate on our past years, in bitterness of heart, and yet labour not so much to avoid future sins, as we deplore what we have already committed. These are days of burial, days of clouds and darkness, days of sorrow and bitterness. Next follows the day of shame, not unlike the other three, when the wretched soul is covered with horrible confusion, while it considers what it hath lost, and revolves black images of sins before the eyes of its heart. In this state the soul dissembles nothing, but judges and aggravates all things, spares not itself, but is its own stern judge. Nevertheless, Lazarus, come forth! Delay no longer in this abomination, in this despair, which is like putrefaction; Lazarus, come forth! abyss calls upon abyss. The abyss of light and mercy upon the abyss of

* Le Sacré Mont d'Olivet. 136. † In Sentent.

misery and darkness. Lazarus, come forth*!" In no stage of the spiritual life was the mourning consequent upon the sense of sin excluded. Thus, Paschasius Radbert mentions the soliloquy of his friend, the holy abbot, Wala, who said, on one occasion, "Why does he appear so sorrowful, as he walks alone? Because he is with himself, and he discerns what is within himself; and therefore he has no joy excepting what springs from hope†."

The infant new born is not exempt from sin. "Hence," says Origen, "we find, in the sacred history, no personage of distinguished sanctity, who regarded the day of his birth as a day of festival and rejoicing‡." It was to complete the triumph of a birth-day feast, that the holy John the Baptist was martyred §. Birth-days were not celebrated in the middle ages, but men rejoiced on the festival of their respective patrons. The Church guided them in this judgment, for she did not rejoice on the day of man's creation, which is the sixth. It soon became unhappy; "But admire the mystery," adds Bossuet: "the day when the first man, Adam, was created, is the same as that on which the new man, the new Adam, died upon the cross. It is, therefore, for the Church, a day of fasting and of mourning—a day which is followed by the sad repose of Jesus Christ in the sepulchre, and which, nevertheless, is full of consolation, by hope of a future resurrection." The Church does not even celebrate the nativity of the saints. "What is this, brethren?" asks St. Augustin, alluding to St. Cyprian. "We know not when this saint was born, and yet we celebrate his birth on this day, which was the day of his passion. But even if we did know the day of his birth, we would not celebrate it, for on that day he was born in sin." These sentiments were universally adopted during the ages of faith. "The day of birth," says Michael Angelo, in a letter to Vasari, "ought not to be celebrated with festivals; they should be kept for the death of the man who has lived virtuously."

Protestantism was a soil in which every weed or plant of

* In Assumptione B. Mariæ, Serm. IV.

† Vita ejus apud Mabill. Acta S. Ordinis Benedict. Sæcul. IV., Pars I.

‡ Hom. Levit. viii. 3. § Matt. xiv. 6.

the ancient heathen life was able to revive and strike root precisely because the supernatural influence of faith was withdrawn, and the observance of birth-days in the ancient style, on the anniversary of which men would render honours to Bacchus, like the Pagans*, furnishes a remarkable example. Sometimes they would celebrate their birth-days as a religious festival. Heriot, who founded a hospital at Edinburgh, in the statutes of his foundation ordered his birth-day to be kept solemnly, and himself to be on that day commemorated in his chapel; and the minister who officiated was to receive five pounds and a bible, which day the Presbyterians continued to celebrate, though they had abolished Christ's birth-day, and the festivals of God's saints. With the moderns, the associations of the natural were stronger than those of the supernatural life, or rather the latter were entirely abandoned: and here we shall do well to remark the difference in regard to real cheerfulness between the festivities of the middle ages, and those of our times: the former were designed to commemorate a glorious and happy triumph, in which no image was seen but what had connection with life, and everlasting gladness; the latter to please men whose hopes extend not beyond the present life, where they place all their happiness, have for subject of rejoicing, an event which is fraught with the gloomy idea of change, of departed youth, and of by-gone years, and of death approaching with rapid step, beyond which this pompous festivity of nature has nothing to promise. So true is it, that even the rejoicings of the world are full of its sadness and bitterness. But it was not only a sense of their own condition that could inspire men of spiritual life with mourning; a regard for the eternal lot of other men, and of humanity in general, would have conduced to it no less. "Consider the multitude and the greatness of the miseries which oppress children," says St. Augustin, "and how the first years of their life are full of vanity and suffering, illusions, and fear. Then when they grow up, and begin to serve God, error tempts them to their seduction; labour and sorrow tempt to other discouragement; concupiscence tempts them to inflame their passions; pride tempts them to exalt themselves; and who can find words to represent the various pains

* Eurip. Io, 1137.

which belong to the yoke of the children of Adam *;" Hence another source of mourning to the just, in the consideration of the evils which are in the world, and of the obstacles which the perverse wills of men present to the beneficent designs of God. "Signa tau in frontibus virorum lugentium," says Ezechiel. "See how good it is to mourn for evils," adds St. Odo, of Cluny, "since it makes men worthy of receiving the stigmata of the cross †." "The soul of a true Christian," says Louis of Blois, "ought, after the example of Jesus Christ, to feel a profound sadness in considering the great number of men who not only do not honour God, but whose impiety despises him, and who lose themselves by sin. How is it possible without grief to behold the ruin of such noble creatures ‡?"

> ———"O ye misguided souls!
> Infatuate, who from such a good estrange
> Your hearts, and bend your gaze on vanity,
> Alas for you §!"

And here I am tempted to borrow a similitude from history, which may place this matter in a stronger light than could be derived from mere discourse of reason; for what must have been the desolation of those few Syracusans, who, as Thucydides relates, believed Hermocrates, and feared for the future, when all the rest of the people were divided, some affirming that the Athenians would in no manner come, and that what was said could not be true; and others, that if they did come it would be to their own greater loss; and others, wholly despising the news, turned the matter to a jest and laughter ||. We have here an emblem of what passes in the world at all times with regard to the predicted vengeance of Heaven; and can it be strange that the insensibility of the majority of men, should fill the hearts of the prudent with mourning and dismay? How can they not mourn when they behold men at variance with the truth, who, as Dante says,—

* S. Augustini cont. Julian. Lib. IV. 16.
† S. Odonis Collat. Lib. II. Bibliothec. Cluniac.
‡ Institut. Spiritual. cap. VI.
§ Dante Parad. IX. || Lib. VI. 35.

"Dream, though their eyes be open; reckless some
Of error: others well aware they err,
To whom more guilt and shame are justly due.
Each the known track of sage philosophy
Deserts, and has a bye-way of his own:
So much the restless eagerness to shine
And love of singularity prevail *."

Alas, in every age the desolation caused by heresy has afflicted the hearts of the faithful. In the fifth century, we are told that so great and innumerable were the horrors of heresy, that not only it was difficult to enumerate, but that it was disgusting to name them. The subtlety of diabolic fraud had so immerged them in the sense of those who perish, that even heretics believed that they had their heretics. Thus men abandoned apostolical tradition, and followed masters of perfidy †. If this were true in the fifth age, what must have been the mourning in that which beheld the commencement of the last great schism, when Christ's holy Church, her divine faith, and her tremendous mysteries, were in so many places "disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn by the rebellious rout amidst their wine?" "Truly," says the mild and humble Louis of Blois, "when I consider the arrogance and impiety of the heretics of our age, I can scarcely refrain from tears: for they will not obey the church; they refuse to be subject to its superiors; they esteem as nothing the primacy of the chief Pontif, who is the supreme vicar of Christ; they petulantly insult the Apostolic See: followers of a monstrous confusion, and revilers of the divine ordination, they wish the visible Church to be without a visible head on earth; they abolish and deride the salutary sacramental confession; heaps of blasphemies against the sacred eucharist, that fountain of divine love and of all good, and against that celestial sacrifice of the mass, I say against that mystery of ineffable dignity, they produce with a barbaric and pagan irreverence ‡."

To make no mention as yet of those persecutions, which must be spoken of in reference to a different beatitude from what we are now considering, sorrow was unavoid-

* Parad. XXIX.

† Consultatio Zachæi Christiani et Apollonii Philosophi, Lib. XI. cap. 11. Apud Dacherii Spicileg. tom. X.

‡ Ludovic. Blosii Collyr. Hæreticorum, Lib. II. cap. 1.

able on a view of the injury inflicted on the Church by the conduct of false disciples. Alas! there has been no age in which this was not a fruitful source of mourning to the just. "We have internal as well as external combats," says St. Boniface, writing to the Bishop Daniel, describing his missionary labours in Saxony, "as when some priest or deacon of the Church departs from the faith and from truth. Tunc deinde prorumpit cum paganis in contumelias filiorum Ecclesiæ, et est obstaculum horrendum evangelio gloriæ Christi *." St. Francis Xavier found that the greatest obstacle to the establishment of the faith in the great kingdoms of Asia, came from the Christians themselves—those false, worldly-wise Christians, who protest against fanaticism †. The love of gain induced some of the richest Portuguese merchants at Sancian to put a stop to the intended voyage of St. Francis Xavier to China—for they said that no doubt the governor of Canton would revenge his boldness upon them by seizing their ships and goods ‡. Wherever there was eminent piety and service, there was reason to expect the enmity and attacks of men professing virtue, who would argue upon the dangers of excess of zeal. A fearful example of this fact is attested on the sides of the Rocky Hall, which served for refectory to the monks of St. Benedict at San Cosimato, where is painted the miraculous preservation of the blessed Father St. Benedict from poison. There are always persons to whom the common dictates of piety seem like the ravings of fanaticism. Catherine de Medicis termed it bigotry to desire that the theatres should be closed in Lent §. Plato says that if a man judges well, he will be of opinion that there are few men very good or very wicked, τοὺς δὲ μεταξὺ πλείστους ||. No doubt, this continued to be the case even in happier times; and it is no less certain, that from those persons who profess and desire to remain in a medium state, the most afflicting embarrassments proceed, which present obstacles to the advancement of truth, the extension of happiness, and the greater glory of God. According to the circumstances of men does

* S. Bonif. Mart. et Archiep. Epist. III.
† Bouhours, Vie de S. F. X. I. 138.
‡ Id. II. 8.
§ Journal de Hen. III. 3. p. 180.
|| Phædo.

the enemy lay his snares; and thus he labours to inspire those who are within the pale,—where none perish by a false belief,—with a secret hate and disrelish for their own brethren, and with a corresponding inclination to esteem their adversaries. St. Peter the Venerable, the fourth abbot of Cluny, was accused by some of the monks of Clairvaux of not following the rule to which he was bound,—of composing laws himself, and of casting aside the precepts of the Fathers,—of breaking the vows which he had made to St. Benedict, and of despising the authority of Bishops in the government of his abbey,—of being too severe, and too merciful *. Without looking farther into this dark volume, methinks here was enough to make many say with Hesiod, that it would be better to die than to have lived to know of such things.

Moreover, if we reflect upon the influence of the Catholic religion upon the human mind, and upon the new relation in which it places men with regard to the events and circumstances of the world, we shall easily understand why Catholics, even during the ages of greatest faith, should have mourned more than other men: for, being imbued by their divine religion with the principles and the love of order, they necessarily feel more intensely the disorders introduced by sin into human society. Having the knowledge of truth, the prevalence of error,—which they know to be such,—must unavoidably fill them with more affliction; and having to maintain positive principles, which are unceasingly attacked by the power of darkness, their life, in an intellectual as well as in a moral sense, becomes a continued combat. The moderns, on the other hand, from being imbued with no principles or love of order, are consequently indifferent to the reign of confusion and disorder. Having no certain apprehension of truth, they are not grieved at the support which is given to a thousand errors, all of which, for any thing they know to the contrary, may be truths, since, from their own highest authority, there may be always an appeal to the suggestions of every man's own mind: and, having no decided ground to maintain, it matters little to them what principles men choose to attack, for they feel an interest in none. They can immediately shift their position as an opponent advances,

* S. Pet. Ven. Epist. Lib. I. 28.

for they place their glory in believing that there may be equal truth in opposite systems,—so they stretch out their hands to all fraternal nullities, and lay claim to the favour of all men alike. Humanly speaking, therefore, they have fewer intellectual causes for mourning than those of the faithful fold; who cannot but feel disorder and recognise error, and stand to meet the enemy, whose momentary victories they can never celebrate as their own. If to this consideration we add the effects of the new relation in which Catholicism places many men with regard to the circumstances of the world, we shall discern still further reason for the mourning of the just. Ah! how must he mourn, in lands which heresy has devastated, whose eyes are suddenly awakened to the divine light of heavenly truth, enabling him to judge rightly for the first time of the character of past events, which before, perhaps, had been the theme of his pride and rejoicing. When led by grace divine to hear the old instructors, their sanctity so wins upon him, that while kings and penal laws pursue them, he mixes his tears with their's, and has thence no desire left on earth but still to succour them. What must be his bitterness, to whom the accumulated woes and horrors of more than three centuries are presented suddenly, in all their nakedness and terror! In an instant, all that ideal of beauty and excellence, which his mind had so long nourished, perishes, and he beholds in its place revealed the secrets of Heaven's vengeance. "Wretched man!" with hand against his breast he cries, "in what blindness hast thou hitherto lived! The friends and martyrs of God thou didst esteem fools, and their life and death without honour; the cruel persecutors, the unjust judges, the base and hypocritical ministers of tyranny, have had all thy esteem: the sorrows of the just have been unknown to thee; their holy discipline thou didst despise. Alas! thou hast misconstrued every thing. Who then can wonder at thy tears and desolation? the burden of many ages on thee light at once, by thy retrospect reviving to torment thee with the thought that they have been."

With regard to themselves, too assuredly such men are not long in discovering, that there is a woe reserved which will affect them personally in the nearest and dearest affections of their heart; for, from the hour that they declare openly for the Church of Christ in oppo-

sition to the profane city and to the innumerable sects of false religions which are made subservient to its interests, calumny, suspicion deep, and hatred, will be directed against them. They are but just converted; and see already how their ancient friend, perhaps their brother, doth begin to make them strangers to his looks of love. "Extraneus factus sum fratribus meis," we may hear them mournfully sing; "et peregrinus filiis matris meæ *." There will not be wanting, perhaps, even in the circle of those who once appeared most to esteem them, persons grave and seeming holy, who will traduce them in the minds of men,

> "Blighting their life in best of its career,
> Branding their thoughts as things to shun and fear."

Moreover, to Catholics, who desire that the glory of the Creator should be extended over the whole earth, and who feel for the calamities of the most distant members of the city of God as intensely as for those of the persons nearest to them, the course of human events of itself presents a more tragic and melancholy aspect than to inconsiderate and selfish men, who care for nothing but what immediately concerns their own interest. What an affecting description do we find in the chronicles of the middle ages, of the mourning in which all Europe was plunged, whenever any calamitous intelligence came from the East! It was in the reign of Henry VI. that the news arrived at Crowland Abbey of the fall of Constantinople, that most celebrated Christian city. "Woe to us Christians who have sinned," exclaims upon this occasion the monk of Crowland. "Why, O Lord, were we born to behold with weeping eyes the desolation of our people and the affliction of our sacred religion? The patriarchal seats, worthy of such veneration,—Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem,—are oppressed with the yoke of slavery or occupied by Saracens and Turks. Christianity is reduced as if into an angle of the world †!" The fall of Jerusalem, the profanation of the holy city, the loss of

* Psalm lxviii.

† Hist. Croylandensis, 529, in Rerum Anglicarum Scriptor. Tom. I.

the holy sepulchre, the sufferings of the chivalry of Palestine, the calamities to which all the Christians of the East would be subject,—these were reflections which turned into houses of mourning every castle and every cottage in France and England. "Vox turturis, vox doloris et gemitus fines Christianorum usque ad mundi ultima lamentabili novitate rumoris perculit," says Godfrey the monk *. When to this common grief was added the pastoral solicitude for the Church, the mourning exceeded the endurance of mortals. Pope Urban III. died of grief on hearing at Ferrara of the fall of Jerusalem. Nicholas V. never recovered from the melancholy which seized him on hearing of the capture of Constantinople by the Turks; and Clement IX. died of grief in consequence of the capture of Candia by the infidels.

But we have not yet glanced at the most mysterious and yet most general cause for the mourning of the devout heart during the ages of faith. The master of the sentences says of holy men, "that in contemplating the great event of the death of Christ, they both rejoice and mourn. 'De eodem ergo lætabantur et tristabantur †'".

"Religion," says a philosopher, "involves infinite mourning. In order to love God, (he means not with love of preference, but with affection) he must require help. How wondrously is this problem solved in Christianity ‡!" Hear how St. Theresa speaks: "The pains of death have encompassed me," said the royal prophet, speaking in the name of Christ, "O what a dreadful evil is sin, when it can cause such pain and even death to a God! Christians now you are called upon to fight in defence of your King. Now you must follow him in this great desertion. There remains to him but a very small number of subjects, and the crowd follows the standard of Satan; and some who wish to be styled his friends in public, betray him in secret, and there is hardly any one left in whom he can perfectly confide! O thou only true friend, what ingratitude in him who betrays thee! O ye who are true Christians weep with your God: the tears which he shed were not for Lazarus alone; but also for all those whom he foresaw would refuse to rise when he

* Godefrid. Monach. ap. Freher. Script. Tom. I. p. 250.
† Petri Lomb. Lib. I. Distinct. XLVIII.
‡ Novalis Schriften II. 305.

should cry to them with a loud voice commanding them to come forth from the tomb*." Here then was a source of mourning in comparison with which all other afflictions were unworthy of mention; for,

> ——— "Upon such a shrine,
> What are our petty griefs? Let no man number his."

"Suffer me to be an imitator of the passion of my God," says St. Ignatius the Martyr in his epistle to the Romans. What an amazing and sublime rule is that which St. Bonaventura proposes as the first fruit of meditating on the passion of Christ, that the highest and most perfect religion, the rule of all perfection of life and virtue, consists in imitating the passion and death of Christ, and endeavouring to be conformable to him in all his sufferings†. "Abhorreo videre cor meum non vulneratum," saith he, "cum videam te Salvatorem sic pro me vilissimæ cruci affixum. Nolo enim, Domine, sine vulnere vivere, quia te video vulneratum ‡."

So the Church prays, "that we who celebrate the mysteries of our Lord's passion may imitate what we commemorate§." "The ascent of the soul by wisdom from the passion is in this manner," says St. Bonaventura, "when a man considers that most blessed passion which I am not worthy to name, in which He of almighty power was trampled upon for us, He, of infinite wisdom, treated as a fool and He, the best and highest, filled with bitterness and condemned to a shameful death, from this the mind rises to an admiration of such divine condescension and benignity; and then, when it masticates that passion of its Lord Jesus, all the ardour of its love begins to be directed towards him: it feels a taste of a certain ineffable sweetness, and its appetite is, as it were, appeased with bitterness. The whole interior of man is thus alienated from itself, and rests in Christ. O mira et a sæculis res inaudita! In ineffabili amaritudine, dulcor indicibilis reperitur||. Nay," continues this seraphic doctor, "in mourning, men fulfil all the vir-

* Exclamat. X.
† S. Bonaventur. Stimul. Amoris, Pars I. Cap. 4.
‡ Id. cap. 2. § Secret. 2d Septemb.
|| Stim. Amoris, Pars I. cap. 7.

tues to which beatitude is promised."—"The splendour of the beatitudes shines forth in the blessed passion of our Lord, which is properly their fountain and origin. For who is poor in spirit unless Christ naked upon the cross? Who is meek unless he who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and who, as a lamb, opened not his mouth? Who mourns, unless he who, with a great cry and tears, offered up supplications for his enemies, who lamented for our sins, and had compassion on our miseries? Who hungered and thirsted after justice unless Christ upon the cross, satisfying for our sins and thirsting after the salvation of souls? Who is merciful unless that Samaritan who bore our infirmities upon his own body? Where is cleanness of heart seen unless in him who cleansed our hearts with his precious blood? Who is pacific, unless he who is our peace, and hath reconciled us to God in his blood? Who suffers persecution for sake of justice, unless he who was crucified by the Jews, against whom men blasphemed and bore lying testimony*?"

The writers of the middle ages say, "that the heart which loves God is overwhelmed with affliction at the thought of having ever preferred the vain joys of the world to the sweetness of present sorrow, that it mourns and despises itself for having ceased to mourn, that it mourns for having left the cross to go to the house of merriment. True," say they, "our sweet adorable Lord went to grace with his presence the marriage feast: he would even contribute to its hilarity and assist the poverty of the bridegroom; but all the while he knew that he himself was advancing to his passion; that his repose was to be the bloody cross, and his feast the vinegar and gall. O divine Jesus! how hard is it for one who loves thee to seek for joy. It is permitted him. Yes, thou smilest upon his youth and biddest him be happy and holy; but ah! he would follow thee to that dread garden where thou wert betrayed, he would follow thee to weep and knock the breast, and to kiss thy bleeding wounds; he would remain at thy sepulchre weeping with the holy women. My sweet adorable Saviour is in agony, and do you bid me join the rout of revellers? he is betrayed and condemned, and do you bid me rejoice with the world which rejected him? O no; better is it

* Id. cap. 8.

to remain apart and pour forth pitying tears with holy Mary, the queen of heaven and mistress of the world, who stood by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, full of sadness! Happy senses of the blessed Virgin Mary," exclaims the Church, "which, without dying, deserved the palm of martyrdom beneath the cross of our Lord *." Ah suffer me to mourn with her, tear me not away from this cross, from this tomb:

"Eïa mater, fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris:
Fac ut tecum lugeam.
Fac me vere tecum flere, crucifixo condolere
Donec ego vixero."

Wounded with these strokes, inebriated with this blood, may I be guarded by the cross, and delivered by the death of Christ.

"Perish the joys that would separate me from those who mourn; perish the honours, the triumph that would require smiles not tears, rejoicing, not mourning. Ah, for a little while I was enticed to join the mirthful crew, and my soul was filled with a different kind of bitterness. It seemed as if I had been condemned to mourn no more with the just, condemned never more to make one of those who sing the pathetic "stabat mater," the "inviolata," or "salve Regina," or "vexilla Regis," aud that seemed equivalent to the sadness and the whole weight of sin and death. O with what transport did I hail my first sweet returning tears; and how was my spirit dissolved in an ecstasy of delight, when I found that I might become again a mourner, and lose the memory of ungrateful joy. Flow fast my tears, flow fast for my having wished to banish ye, for my having forgotten and betrayed my infant Saviour, my despised Saviour, my crucified Saviour. What joy is comparable to the sweetness of these tears? Certainly not the world's joy; not for all that it can offer would I ever again exchange them. Only Paradise, only the blessed face of Christ, only the ineffable beatific vision of God in his eternal glory can make my soul forget them." They are the expressions of mourners, but the foretaste of heaven; belonging to earth, but never to be wiped from the eyes of those who aspire after inno-

* Commun. fest. of the 7 doloun.

cence, till the day of glory comes, that day of joy which shall never end.

Here we are naturally directed to inquire respecting those penitential exercises of which we find such repeated mention in the history of the ages of faith; for we must already have touched at the source from which they sprung, and this is a subject which belongs intimately to the history of ancient manners.

CHAPTER IV.

That the spirit of mortification, of self-sacrifice, and of penance belonged to the mourning of the faithful, is manifest from what has been already seen respecting the order of their life and the natural desire of their hearts; but independent of incidental causes, it was of necessity characteristic of the Christian discipline, in consequence of the express requisition of God, and of the positive advantages which resulted from it in the progress to spiritual perfection. The words of Christ admitted of no exceptions, "Abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam quotidie *." "What is the question," asks Tertullian, "you are anxious to know—if your penance will be useful to you or not before God? What does it matter? God commands you to do it; is not that enough to oblige you to obey him? When there should be nothing but the respect which is due to his authority, he deserves that you should have regard to him in preference to your own utility †." The command is without exception. The vessel of election was not dispensed from this law, and hence we read "Castigo corpus meum ‡." David who sinned had no escape, though he was the man after God's own heart. It was penance which rendered him so, as St. Ambrose intimates. "Peccavit David," says he, "quod solent Reges: sed pœnitentiam gessit, flevit, in-

* S. Luc. IX. 23. † De Pœnitent.
‡ Epist. ad Corinth. I. cap. 9.

gemuit, quod non solent Reges *." Cause some find for doubt in that the Pagans have been known to practise austerities with the view of appeasing their deities; but reason and tradition have enabled men in all ages to discern some truths, and if the consent of philosophers were a proof against a practice or a doctrine, there would be few points of Christian discipline or faith secure. Besides there is a wide distinction to be observed here. There have been superstitions among the heathens, which induced their votaries to practise mortifications beyond which human nature cannot attain; but as Bourdaloue remarks, "the difference between Christians and the followers of Pagan severity consisted in this, that while these men mortified their flesh, they abandoned their minds to all the impulses of passion. Whereas the mortification of Christians was chiefly that of the heart, as a means to reform and purify it †." Otherwise, it was of no avail, insomuch that in relation to men who were truly contrite or truly inflamed with the love of God, the opinion of Fichte, at least in one sense, was correct, that for them there was no longer any self-denial; no longer any sacrifices; for the self which is to be denied, the objects which are to be sacrificed, have been removed from their sphere of vision, and estranged from their affections. This denial, these sacrifices can only excite wonder in those who continue to value the objects of them, and who have not yet given them up; when once they are given up, they vanish into nothing, and we find that we have lost nothing." The holy Fathers universally maintain the vanity of all corporal austerities, unless the mind and heart be corrected.

"Beware," says St. Jerome, "lest your fasts become a source of pride. You fast, and ill-humour makes you insupportable: another does not fast, and he is gentle to all the world. You lose by your vices the fruit of your mortification ‡." In what used to be styled the dark ages, St. Columban reminds his monks of the same distinction. "Do not suppose," saith he, "that it is enough to fatigue the dust of our bodies with fasts and watchings, if we do not also reform our manners. To macerate the flesh, if the soul does not fructify, is to till

* Lib. de Apolog. David.

† Serm. sur la Sévérité Chrétienne.

‡ S. Hieronym. Epist. ad Eustoch Virg.

the ground without ceasing, and never to reap fruit from it. What signifies it to carry on a distant war, if the interior be a prey to ruin? A religion, all of gestures and movements of the body, is vain. The suffering of the body alone is vain; the care which man takes of his exterior is vain, if he do not also watch and preserve his soul. True piety consists in humility, not of the body, but of the heart. It is not enough to speak and read about virtues. Is it with words alone that a man cleanseth his house of filth? Can any work be accomplished without labour? Gird up your loins, then, and never cease to combat*." Besides, after all, it is quite clear that the Christian spirit of self-sacrifice was unknown to the Pagans, and in vain shall we look for it in the scenes which recall the most renowned deeds of their heroic devotion. When we are led to expect an instance of this pure and noble spirit, it is rather a calculation of evils, and the choice of the least, which gives rise to the apparent offering. Thus, it is not until after a long examination of the indignities which await her, if she continue to live, that Macharia, in Euripides, resolves to embrace death. It is better to die, she concludes, than to suffer such things †; and, in like manner, in the Iphigenia, in Aulis, the spirit of the victim is completely opposite to that of sacrifice in the Christian sense. "What is the marriage of Paris and Helen to me? It is the sweetest of all things to behold the light"—

——— μαίνεται δ', ὃς εὔχεται
θανεῖν· κακῶς ζῆν κρεῖσσον, ἢ θανεῖν καλῶς ‡.

So also Polyzena consents to die; but it is because she perceives that longer life would not be to her advantage, since she has lost the dignity of her ancestral rank, and all her hopes of being married to a king, since she is now a slave, a humiliation to which she is not accustomed, and in her situation it is a much more happy thing to die than to live, for to live not in honour is the greatest misery§. The Antigona, of Sophocles, presents, indeed, an instance of very high sentiment, but then it is mixed with hatred and contempt for the unjust decree of the

* S. Instit. II. Bibliothec. Patrum, Tom. XII. cap. 10.
† Heraclid. 524. ‡ 1237. § Hecuba, 340.

tyrant, who has presumed to meddle in what concerns him not, the discharge of her domestic duties*. But, say the Protestants, is not the indulgence in the spirit of sacrifice and mortification, and is not the whole doctrine of penance an injury to the atonement, and a rejection of the grace of God? And besides this, surely, to use the words of Fichte, "The voice of philosophy does not call upon us to mortify ourselves: O, no; it calls upon us to cast away that which affords no enjoyment; that when we have done so, that which is a teeming source of endless enjoyment, may come and take possession of our souls?" The voice of philosophy, to reply, in brief, has, no doubt, often pronounced things very sweet in comparison with the bitterness of truth. Its error here does not consist in an over fine spinning of truth. It is essentially an error. The voice of God, whatever that of philosophy may say, calls upon men to mortify their corrupt nature upon earth, and to take up their cross daily; and, with respect to the theological argument, it is quite a sufficient answer, that, if it were valid, Christ himself would not have required self-mortification in the words above cited, nor would his Apostles have practised it. It would be more to the purpose to inquire respecting what has been transmitted by the voice of the ancient Fathers, than concerning the affirmations of philosophy; though Calvin might say, "he was not moved by what was every where found in the writings of the ancients on satisfaction †." "Dominus orandus est," says St. Cyprian, "Dominus nostra satisfactione placandus est. Qui sic Deo satisfecerit—lætam faciet ecclesiam, nec jam solam Dei veniam merebitur, sed coronam ‡." To the like effect speak Tertullian, St. Ambrose, and all the holy fathers, as may be seen at length in Sardagna, or any other dogmatical theologian §. St. Augustin expressly says, "That it is not sufficient to change our manners for the better, and to depart from evil, unless we satisfy God, by penance, for the things which we have done, by the sacrifice of a contrite heart, with alms co-operating ‖." That man should be called to suffer, does not derogate, as the modern sects pretend, from the merits of Christ, in whom, as the Council of

* 48. † Instit. Lib. III. c. 4. § 38.
‡ Tract. de Lapsis. § Tom. VIII. ‖ Serm. CCCLI.

Trent observes, is all our glory, and in whom we satisfy God's justice*." Though original sin has been remitted, man still suffers temporal death. Do they think it would be fair to conclude, from this fact, that the satisfaction of Christ was not full and abundant? Mortal sin is forgiven, and yet temporal penalty is exacted by God. Adam was pardoned, and yet condemned to die. Moses and Aaron were pardoned†, and yet punished. by not being permitted to enter the land of promise. David was pardoned ‡, and yet to punish him his son was condemned to die. St. Augustin draws the conclusion§; and the holy Fathers, on similar ground, press the necessity for penance, to avert the punishment of God‖. Remission of temporal punishment is gratuitous, although man is to give satisfaction, because it is the free gift of God which enables his works to be satisfactory through Christ, and because these works are themselves the fruit of Divine grace. Our satisfactions are the means by which the price of redemption is applied to us; and this is a point which ought to present no difficulties to the Protestants, who admit that, without faith, the merits of Christ are not applied, although their value is independent of it.

All theologians firmly believed, and clearly taught, that the satisfaction of Christ was sufficient, as far as price, to expiate all the sins of men, and that the private works of satisfaction were not required to supply any defect in that price, but on account of the reasons thus explained by the Council of Trent:—"It becomes the Divine clemency, that our sins should not be remitted to us without some satisfaction; lest, taking occasion from lighter sins, we should fall into greater, becoming contumelious to the Holy Spirit, treasuring up wrath to ourselves against the day of wrath. Without doubt, these satisfactory penalties recal men powerfully from sin, restrain them as if with a bridle, and make them more cautious and vigilant; heal the wounds of former sins, and of former vicious habits. In addition to this, by suffering for sin, we are made conformable to Jesus Christ, who

* Sess. XIV. cap. 8.
† Num. 20.
‡ Reg. 12, 13.
§ In Ps. L.
‖ Tertull. de Pœnitent. 4. S. Cyprian. de Lapsis. St. Jerome in Joelem. S. Chrysostom. Hom. 41. ad pop. Antioch.

satisfied for us—ex quo omnis nostra sufficientia est; and we have a pledge, that if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified along with him*." St. Ambrose says, "That he has heard of persons who deny the merit of abstinence and fasting, and continence, whom he refutes, by reminding them of the sentences of St. Paul; and then he adds, "Qui non castigant corpus suum, et volunt prædicare aliis, ipsi reprobi habentur†." The advantages derived from mortification of the senses, were clearly discerned during the ages of faith. The wisdom of God explains why mortification should be good for man—"Quoniam in igne probatur aurum et argentum, homines vero acceptabiles in camino humiliationis‡." There is a pain which purges and purifies, and a pain which consumes and devours: this last is the portion of the wicked. Pain, without penance, is the fire of hell. "Woe to the heretics," cries St. Ephrem, "who say there is no such thing as penance. They deserve to be likened to those insane men who say there is no God; for to say that there is no God, or to annihilate his mercy by saying that there are no remedies able to cure the wounds of weak unassisted men, are one and the same thing. On the other hand, I grant to you, that there is no such thing as penance; but I mean for those who abuse penance, that they may sin, for this is to mock God§." "O divine clemency," exclaims Basil, bishop of Seleucia, "to what a dignity does penitence attain! Men weep and God is changed; mortals lament, and the immortal decree is cancelled‖!" The reason of the early philosophers and the judgment of the ancients generally, pointed out to them the advantages of mortification. The Pythagoreans observed abstinence from flesh as conducive to purity of mind, health of body, and promptitude of understanding¶. Aurelian, the Emperor, ascribed his constant health to a custom of abstaining one day in every month from food and drink. Augustus Cæsar was remarkable for his abstinence, as Suetonius relates. Plato adopted an

* Vide La Hogue Tractat. de Incarnatione, 92. Sardagna de Satisfactione. Theolog. Tom. VIII. p. 217.

† Epist. Lib. X. 82.

‡ Ecclus. c. 2. 5.

§ S. Ephrem. Tractat. de Pœnitentia.

‖ Basil Sentent. or 12.

¶ Jamblic. de Pathagoric. Vita, cap. 16.

austere life. Hermodius arrived at the age of an hundred, Democritus and Hippocrates at that of an hundred and five, by a life of abstinence. Drexelius mentions, as among the many fruits of fasting, "The rendering serene all the senses, external and internal*;" so the Church, in her prayer at the beginning of Lent, speaks of "This solemn fast, which is a wholesome institution, to heal both our souls and bodies." In the primitive Church, fasts were entitled stations. "Our fasts are camps to us," says St. Ambrose, "which defend us from diabolic attacks; and they are called stations, because, standing in them, we repel our enemy." How remarkable are the following words of the sacred text, "Jejunium nescit fœneratorem, non sortem fœneris novit: non redolet usuras mensa jejunantium†." In the history of the middle ages, we have this sentence illustrated; for it was not so common then, as in modern times, to witness the fall and ruin of ancient and noble houses, to hear of their being stript of their ancestral domains, or become the spoil of usurers. The spirit of the Catholic discipline, which they observed, was unacquainted with the terms mortgage and interest; and we find, in consequence, that patrimonial estates were retained through a long succession of ages. St. Basil the Great, says, "That all the saints have rendered their lives worthy by fasting‡." All the most holy and approved persons that we read of in the sacred pages, Moses, Elias, Juditha, Esther, Sarah, Job, Tobias, Esdras, David, Ezekiel, are expressly recorded to have fasted. Daniel fed on pulse, and wisdom gained. In the new law, our Saviour Christ set us an example. St. Paul, Barnabas, Simon, Lucius, and other followers of Paul, were in many fastings. St. Gregory Nazianzen says, "That St. Peter almost always fasted, and ate only beans." St. Matthew, as St. Clemens Alexandrinus testifies, lived upon herbs and roots. It is recorded of St. James the Greater, of St. James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, and of St. John, that they always abstained from flesh meat. Honey and locusts were the food of the Precursor in the Wilderness; and Hegesippus relates, "That the first Christians were taught to

* Hier. Drexelius de Jejunio, Lib. II. cap. 5.
† Judith, cap. 1, 2.
‡ De Laude Jejunii.

abstain, by the blessed Marc Pontif, of Alexandria." Passing on to later ages, we find Theodosius the Younger accustoming himself to fast twice every week, and to abstain from wine in Lent, Charlemagne fasting even to the risk of injuring his health, Otho the Great, making his whole army observe a fast, before giving battle to the Hungarians, Lothaire, King of the Franks, continuing to observe a fast during a dangerous illness, and the Emperor Ferdinand I. adopting a rule of great abstinence after the death of his excellent wife. Of the abstinence and self-control of Rodolph the Emperor, history relates an heroic instance; for, being on an expedition with his army, and oppressed with thirst, a vessel of water, which a peasant was carrying, was immediately seized upon, and brought to him as a great treasure; but he ordered it to be restored to the peasant, untouched, saying, " I thirst not for myself, but for my army*."

In a future place, when I shall come to speak of the festivals and seasons of the Church, it will be necessary to return to this subject, and describe, at more length, the manners of the middle ages, in relation to the ecclesiastical law of fasting and abstinence. Solemn public penance, instituted on occasion of the Novatian heresy, which accused the Church of being too indulgent in receiving back sinners, was abrogated earlier in the Greek than in the Western Church. In the latter, it ceased with the seventh century, when alms, pilgrimages, and confinement in monasteries, were substituted for it, which alteration is, by some, ascribed to Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was a Greek. The ancient severity, however, did not begin to be relaxed until after the eleventh century. In the times of greatest fervour, the discipline of the Church respecting the greatness and duration of penance was never invariable. Each age, each province, had its customs. In one place, public penance was reserved for very few crimes; in another it was required for a greater number. The same sins were not punished with equal rigour, but much depended upon the local judicature. Universally, however, the fundamental parts of penance were the same; so that the objection advanced by heretics, against the use of the word penance, is a mere quarrel about words. That a change of mind was requi-

* Drexelius de Jejunio, Lib. I. c. 3.

site, every one knew without having studied Greek, or heard their pedantic eloquence.

The first thing required in penance was the ordination of the mind to God: but, says St. Thomas, "the mind cannot duly be converted to God without charity*." And elsewhere he says, "Omnes virtutes participant aliquid de charitate†." And St. Bernard says, "Charity converts the soul‡." Hence, St. Augustin says, that unless the Holy Spirit should make man a lover of God, he will not be transferred from the left hand to the right§. It would require but a slight acquaintance with the history of religion to be able to detect the error of those modern writers, who, speaking of such men as the Count of Anjou, apply the term "miserable" to the penitents of the middle ages. If penitents,—in the sense in which the word was then used,—no men were less miserable. Assuredly it was not an unhappy state for man, born the child of wrath, and fallen from baptismal innocence, to be dismissed from the sacred tribunals as were Adam and Eve from Paradise,

> "Sent forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace."

It was in allusion to spirits far more grievously afflicted, though resembling these penitents of earth, that the great poet of the ages of faith exclaimed,

> ———— "O spirits! secure,
> Whene'er the time may be, of peaceful end‖!"

And of whom he elsewhere says,

> "He show'd me many others, one by one:
> And all, as they were nam'd, seem'd well content,
> For no dark gesture I discern'd in any¶."

In the air and countenance of one of these penitents of the middle ages, if suddenly one of them could be introduced into a circle of the most refined modern society, there would be nothing to strike the attention as re-

* Lib. IV. cont. Gentes, cap. 72. † In III. Dist. 26 art. 2.
‡ De diligendo Deo, 12. § De Trinitate, Lib. XV. 18.
‖ Dante, Purg. xxvi. ¶ Id. xxiv.

markable, excepting, perhaps, a more than ordinary gentleness and dignity. Hear how St. Jerome describes Asella: "Nothing can be milder than her severity, nothing more severe than her mildness; nothing more melancholy than her sweetness, nothing sweeter than her melancholy. Her figure denotes mortification without the least parade; her words are like silence, and her silence has words: her exterior is always the same; her dress exhibits nothing refined or curious; her ornaments consist in their plainness. The good speak of her with admiration, and the wicked dare not attack her. Let the priests of the Lord, on beholding her, be filled with profound veneration *."

In the ages of greatest fervour, a due and rational attention to health was never excluded in the most austere discipline of penitents. St. Jerome, in condemning immoderate fasts and austerities, quotes the saying of the seven sages of Greece,—"Nothing too much;" and declares it to be as wise and just a maxim as it is celebrated †. St. Bonaventura mentions that the blessed St. Francis would never suffer his friars to injure their health by too much severity. Experience, indeed, would here suffice. St. Hilarion lived to the age of eighty-four; St. Augustin and St. Jerome, Paphnutius, Macarius and St. Francis de Paul, lived to ninety; St. Anthony to one hundred; Udalricus, Bishop of Padua, to one hundred and five; St. Simeon Stylites to one hundred and ten; St. Paul the Hermit to one hundred and thirteen; Arsenius and Romualdus to one hundred and twenty years: and all, after a life of rigid abstinence and fasting. Hear how St. Chrysostom writes to Olympias: "Neither the rigour of winter nor the weakness of my health, should inspire you with any fear. The winter, though as severe as in Armenia, and that is to say every thing, does not incommode me to excess, for we have taken measures against it, and we neglect nothing to secure us from its inconveniences. For that purpose we keep up a good fire—we carefully exclude the external air from our apartment—we cover ourselves with many clothes; and, as a last resource, we keep within doors. After my example, venerable Olympias,

* S. Hieronym. Epist. ad Marcellam.
† Epist. ad Demetriad.

attend to your health; I conjure you, I ask it of you as a grace. Direct all your attention to keep off infirmities. Remember too, that sadness can cause infirmities. Think of the misery of those whose body is worn down by sickness, and reduced to such a state that they can no longer enjoy either the seasons or the things needful to life. I implore you then to procure the assistance of the most skilful physicians, and to apply the proper remedies to deliver you from these maladies *."—"If some should come and say to you not to fast, lest you should be made weak, do not believe them nor listen to them," says St. Athanasius, "for by them the enemy suggests this. Remember what is written,—that when the three children and Daniel, and the other captive youths, were led by the King of Babylon, and commanded to eat of his table, and they refused, and did eat only of the seeds of the earth, that, after ten days, when introduced into the presence of the king, their faces, instead of being squalid, appeared more beautiful than those of the others who had been fed at the royal table. See then," continues this great saint, "that fasting does not produce what you dread. It cures diseases, it dries up the humours of the body; it puts the demon to flight; it expels bad thoughts; it renders the mind clearer, the heart purer, the body holier; and, in short, it raises man to the throne of God."

Finally: in the Father of the Scholastic Theology, we find the same counsels of prudence and moderation:—"Injure not your health," says St. Anselm. "Melius est enim ut cum salute corporis, læto animo aliquid faciatis, quam per ægritudinem ab his quæ cum lætitiâ bene facitis, deficiatis †." Thus, those extravagant and gloomy images of penance, which some men associate with the remembrance of the scholastic-romantic ages, have, in general, no other foundation but the fancy of poets and the misrepresentation of the adversaries of the holy Church.

But let us on; our length of way admonishes to speed, and we have to mark other instances of mortification and penance, as connected with the character of those who mourned with effectual grief. To speak of the ordinary

* Letter to Olympias.

† S. Anselmi Epist. CL. ad Goffrid.

exercises which were recommended by the universal consent of the spiritually wise, would be long and needless. In this respect, the manners of the middle ages present nothing remarkable, excepting the fervour and sincerity with which the discipline of a penitential life was observed by men in every class of society. Behold that race of mourners, all downward lying, prone upon the ground, and weeping sore. These are the elect of God, in whom repentant tears mature that blessed hour, when they shall find absolution from the holy Church, and with Heaven acceptance. "My soul hath cleaved to the dust," you hear with such deep sighs uttered, that they well nigh choke the words. But let us pass on to view still more remarkable fruits of penance, undertaken by contrite sinners, some of whose voluntary penal woes are well calculated to excite our astonishment. Genebaud, Bishop of Laon, penetrated with a sense of the sinfulness of his conduct in having yielded to a foul temptation, sent to entreat St. Remi to come to Laon, at whose feet he prostrated himself, and confessed his fault. To repair the public scandal of his fall, the bishop shut himself up in a dark cell, more like a tomb than the abode of a living man, and there he passed seven years in prayer and fasting, tears and watching. During this time, St. Remi undertook the charge of his diocese, and at its expiration, he restored him to his episcopal see *. In the year 582, St. Hospice, a recluse, shut himself up in a tower to do penance, near a celebrated monastery at Nice, in Provence. In that tower he lived a long time till his death. Celebrated also was the example of Dominick Loricat, or the Cuirassed, a renowned penitent at the end of the tenth century, so called because he wore next the skin a coat of mail, which he used to lay aside only for the discipline. The extraordinary austerities of this man furnished a striking lesson to the rude warriors who knew him, of the heinousness of sin. But as they were accustomed to a life of every kind of hardship, a moderate penance would have been counted for nothing: or rather, it would have seemed to them like a recognition of the lightness of sin. Some modern writers, who

* Anquetil, Hist. de Reim, Lib. I. 50.

profess to philosophize, express the utmost astonishment at meeting with such acts of mortification in a religion which lays claim to peace and blessed charity: but such amaze will not be long the inmate of a thoughtful breast. If it had been evinced in ages of faith, they who expressed it would have been referred for solution to the Gospel which is read on the first Sunday of that solemn season, when the Church sings "Creator alme siderum," and reminds men of the coming of our Lord to judgment; and of those dread words, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the just unto life eternal."—"What will be the tribunal of the Judge," cries St. Augustin, "when the cradle of the infant terrified proud kings*." Who can think of the day of his coming? and who will stand to behold him? At that tremendous hour of last judgment, when, as St. Ephrem says, "the priest will be separated from the priest, the bishop from the bishop, the father from the son, the daughter from the mother,—when the reprobate, cast off from before the face of God, will find themselves alone, deprived of all assistance, abandoned even by hope,—when they will cry, 'O how could we lose in indifference the time that was given us! What shall we do? Alas! we can no longer do penance! The time is past. No more shall we see the innumerable legions of angels and saints, no more shall we contemplate that true light which enlightens the abode of the blessed! Behold us here isolated, rejected, far from God, far from joy. Farewell, ye just; farewell, apostles, prophets, martyrs. Farewell, all ye that are happy and holy†!"

These were the considerations which moved men with such force to do penance seriously; for they said with St. Augustin, "If man wished to punish himself, God would spare him. Sit oportet ipse severus in se, ut in eum sit misericors Deus‡."

Hear how St. Odo, the abbot of Cluny, speaks of the danger of sin; and consider what an impression such words must have made upon the simple, profound, and susceptible minds of men in the middle ages. "Adam once sinned, and is dead. If you therefore should sin, expect not to be spared. If any one could have been

* Serm. II. de Epiph. † Serm. LXXII.
‡ S. August. Serm. CCLXXVIII.

spared, it would have been Adam, who was new-made, tender, and rude, and who had before known no sin;—but as for you who wish to sin after the Law, after the Prophets, after the Gospel, after the Apostles,—what hope can there be of indulgence * ?"

There is one remarkable characteristic of the middle ages, which we should constantly bear in mind whenever we institute a comparison between them and our own times, in relation either to literature, art, or religion,—it is, that these things were all taken seriously, taken in earnest. While hearing the moderns converse on subjects of religious truth, one might expect every moment that some of them would have sufficient acuteness and consistency as to propose a question like that of Callicles, to Socrates, who, after hearing his noble statement of the evil of sin, consisting in its nature rather than in its punishment, exclaims, "O Socrates, tell us whether you say these things seriously or only in jest, for if you are serious, and it be really true what you now say, without doubt it follows that our whole life is perverse, and that we do all things exactly contrary to what we ought †."

In the middle ages, it is true men did not seem to believe that the way to heaven was precisely the broadest and easiest that presented itself to the senses; they were impressed with the idea that their souls could not be saved without retirement, meditation, and occasional renouncement of lawful pleasures; many of the penitential austerities were no doubt great; but who can hear without trembling what St. Gregory says, "that more men perish by means of false penance than by impenitence itself;" and after this, who can feel inclined to criticise the penitents of ages of faith? It is not, however, to be denied, but that occasionally the spirit of human severity may have mixed itself with the austerity of penance, so as to have occasioned great and grievous abuse. When the passions of men are strong, they are sometimes fearful even in the deeds which spring from virtuous sources; and the facts of ancient history are not to be concealed because some men in modern times have chosen to exaggerate and pervert them thoughtlessly, or for malignant

* S. Odonis, Abb. Clun. II. Collation. Lib. II. Bibliothec. Cluniac.

† Plat. Gorgias.

purposes. The horrible tale professing to reveal the secrets of monastic penance in the middle ages, which the genius of a modern bard has rendered so familiar, contains abundant internal evidence, that the author wrote from vague and general report, and without having ever studied the subject which he pretended to illustrate. Who that has read the rules of the blessed St. Benedict, breathing nothing but seraphic love and sanctity, will not lift up his hands in astonishment, on hearing that account of the judgment pronounced upon Constance de Beverley in the abbey of Lindisfarn, where the three Heads of houses are feigned to have sat for horrible doom:

> "All servants of Saint Benedict,
> The statutes of whose order strict
> On iron table lay!"

As if that holy book gave them authority to commit the barbarous deed which imparts such a horrible intent to this narrative.

How grave and moral writers can be guilty of this strange readiness to admit and propagate slanders against the saintly and illustrious dead, I know not, nor is it necessary for us here to inquire. What we have to do is to examine the real facts which may have originally suggested the idea of this celebrated romance; and no one need shrink from such an investigation, through a tenderness for the character of former times, for it is no reproach peculiar to any age, that some men should have been found in it, who were without prudence or without charity. The first mention of a penitential prison for guilty monks, occurs in the writings of St. John Climachus, who was abbot of Mt. Sinai, at the end of the sixth century. St. Benedict who lived before this book of St. John Climachus had appeared, prescribed in his rule various modes of correction for monks who offended, but he makes no mention of a prison; although in the XVIIIth chapter, he enumerates accurately all the precautions and punishments to be used before expelling a monk as incorrigible. "But," says Mabillon, in his treatise on the Monastic prisons, "the hardness of some abbots in subsequent times, was carried to such an excess, that they mutilated the limbs of some monks who were guilty of great crimes, so that the monks obtained from Charle-

magne, an especial decree for their protection. All the abbots being assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, in 817, ordered that in each monastery there should be a retired house, domus semota, for the guilty, a chamber with a fire-place and an anti-chamber for work. This was ordained by all the abbots of the empire, France, Germany, and Italy. It was in subsequent times that Matthew Prior of St. Martin-des-champs, according to the report of Peter the Venerable, invented a fearful kind of prison which was without light, and destined for those who were to be perpetually confined, and it was called the Vade in Pace. The abbot was guilty of this excess through his extravagant severity and hatred of sin; but he inflicted it upon only one criminal monk. Stephen, Archbishop of Toulouse, complained of these inventions to king John, "de horribili rigore quem monachi exercebant adversus monachos graviter peccantes." This led to measures of prevention in future; Mabillon expresses his astonishment at such inhumanity in monks, who ought to be models of all gentleness and compassion; but it should be remembered how rare and isolated were such instances in the long succession of ages; how solitary they stand in history, and unconnected with any part of monastic discipline; and that after all, the immunities of the religious, who were not subject to the civil power, made some provision for the punishment of great offenders absolutely necessary. As for the story of Constance, it is utterly defective in regard to history, inasmuch as the extension of such penalties to communities of women is a mere invention; and even if the author had adhered to limits within which he would have had some foundation, the unwarranted assertions, to use the gentlest expression, which are woven through the whole tissue of his poem, would, to any reader of moderate instruction, have destroyed all colouring of truth. This Matthew Prior of St. Martin-des-Champs, to whom he is so greatly indebted, was not to mankind but to sin a foe; ignorant it is true, but justifying no poet in the conclusion that he had retired into the cloister "for despite and envy;" or "that he joyed in doing ill." The whole abuse is to be ascribed to the extravagant zeal of some well-meaning men in times of great severity of principles; and we find that there was no obstacle or delay in providing against it effectual remedies.

CHAPTER V.

We have already seen some of the works of mourning which were substituted for the solemn public penance of the ancient canons; but that which in a literary or poetical point of view, is the most interesting of these works, remains to be considered, which consisted in the pilgrimages either expressly prescribed or voluntarily undertaken for the correction of passions and the expiation of sins. Of the former, some were imposed for great offences as a more severe penalty than that which was enacted against them by the civil laws. Men who had committed homicide were ordered to go on pilgrimage to various holy places in foreign lands, bound all the while with iron chains, for in these ages capital punishment was rarely inflicted. These chains were worn round the neck and also on both arms; sometimes the pilgrims deserved to be freed from them, and then they were freed in the church *. The four miserable knights who murdered St. Thomas at Canterbury, after long wanderings, were enjoined to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and there to live as penitential converts on the black mountain. Some were to be condemned to pass the whole remainder of their lives on pilgrimage. Such were degraded priests who should have discovered the secret of confession. "Deponatur, et omnibus diebus vitæ suæ ignominiosè peregrinando pergat." We read of others who were never to remain more than one night in the same place.

At Rheims disputes and combats between the citizens, used generally to be terminated by the sheriffs, and the most usual penalty inflicted was a pilgrimage. The persons condemned were to set out on a fixed day, and to remain in the town indicated during three, six, or twelve months, and to bring back authentic certificates. It was generally a pilgrimage to St. James in Gallicia, to Tours, Toulouse, Marseilles, or Boulogne sur Mer. The two

* Mabillon, Præfat. in II. Sæcul. Benedict. § 5.

enemies were often condemned to travel, but in different directions, which, as Anquetil remarks, "was a simple and wise method of re-establishing peace between them, for time and new objects, and the interposition of friends to calm the minds of both parties, were always sure to heal the wounds *." But the pilgrims who chiefly demand our attention at present belong to a different class from these: they were men who, without having rendered themselves amenable to human laws, had undertaken painful journeys in obedience to what was prescribed to them by religion, as affording the means of correcting vices, and of atoning in the sense required for the sins of their past life.

The palmer differed from the pilgrim in having no fixed residence, but spending his life in visiting holy places, at the same time professing voluntary poverty. Spenser, without scorn, describes the former:

> "At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
> An aged sire, in long blacke weedes yclad
> His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
> And by his belt his booke he hanging had;
> Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad;
> And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
> Simple in show, and voide of malice bad;
> And all the way he prayed as he went,
> And often knockt his breast, as one that did repent †."

The church had introduced the custom of assigning a journey to the holy land as an efficacious penance; and there are not wanting even modern writers separated from its communion who can discern and point out the wisdom of what was thus recommended. "I know of nothing," says one of these, "so likely to bow down a proud spirit, and soften it into deep and purifying thought, as a long distant journey. There is no heart proof against the solemn influence of solitude among strange and impressive scenes. The confidence which it has in itself, and in which its contempt for the future was intrenched, gradually gives way among them. The new forms under which nature presents herself, are so many proofs that there is an existence and a power, of which, in the thoughtless uniformity of the past, it had

* Hist. de Reims, lib. III. 155. † F. Q. I. 1.

received no idea, and with that new consciousness, rushes in a train of feelings, which, if not the same, are nearer than most others to those inspired by religion. For this effect of the long and often perilous journey which he prescribed, the priest might look with some degree of confidence; and no doubt experience taught him, that the hardiest of his penitents was not likely to come back from Syria with a mind unimpressed with the sentiments he wished to inspire. Other advantages also presented themselves in favour of this kind of penance. To the natural influence of the journey through wild and distant countries, was added that of the example of many devout and enthusiastic wanderers. At every stage of his route, the traveller was sure to meet one or more of these humble palmers, either hastening to, or returning from, the holy city. Their humility, self-denial, and constant prayer, were powerful appeals to the haughty soul of the unwilling pilgrim. Generally also he was, by the nature of his expedition, far separated from his former companions: for his proud knights and splendid retinue no longer followed him as a gay and gallant noble; and if they accompanied him, it was to be worshippers, like himself, at the holy tomb He was thus led to form associations which materially aided the purposes for which the penance was imposed, and the priest knew that his instructions and exhortations to repentance would be repeated as many times as there were leagues between his parish and the sacred walls of Jerusalem. Nor are reasons of another kind wanted to justify the preference of pilgrimages over other penances. What could be more proper than to send him, who had broken the laws of Christ, to contemplate the scenes which had been hallowed by his sufferings? What could better persuade to repentance, than the sight of objects which recalled to mind all he had done for the sake of mankind, and to bring them under the dominion of love and peace? The guilty violator of divine laws could not tread the streets of the holy city, without feeling as if the very stones cried out against him, to remind him, as his eyes turned towards the heights of Calvary, that he had 'crucified the Son of God afresh.'" So far this writer. But the moral advantages of this discipline were well understood and explained with greater clearness at the time when it received the highest sanction. In all ages, many of those

who thought seriously about their salvation, used at times to leave their home and family to have leisure to follow God, disengaged from domestic cares, going out of their own country like the Magi, to repair to Christ.

We read of many saints who, by the inspiration of God, have abandoned houses, and riches, and friends, to travel like pilgrims through strange nations, in order to serve him more at ease and freedom. In this conduct, they imitated not only Abraham but the apostles. They felt that the distractions and ties of a multitude of friends and riches, and worldly concerns, left them not sufficient leisure to attend to the interests of their souls, and the fruits of such pilgrimages were so notorious that it became a proverb. "Exeat aula qui volet esse pius."

Many remarkable examples of this kind are found in the records of the middle age. Frodoard, in his history of the Church of Rheims relates, that in the time of Foulques Archbishop, who had succeeded Hincmar, there came into the province of Rheims, seven brothers, Gibrian, Helan, Tresan, Germain, Veran, Atran and Petran, with their three sisters, Fracia, Promptie, and Possenna, come from Ireland in pilgrimage, for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; and they established themselves each in a separate place on the banks of the river Marne. Gibrian, who was a priest, inhabited the village of Cosse, where he lived many years soberly, justly, and piously, applying himself till the end of his life to combat for his salvation *. In the seventh century, St. Giles seeing that he could not lead an obscure and retired life in his own country, where his piety and learning made him the object of general admiration, resolved to leave it to avoid the applause of men; he, therefore, passed into France, and chose for his dwelling a hermitage in the desert, which was near the mouth of the Rhone. Thence he removed into a place called Garde, and thence into a forest in the diocese of Nismes. The Saxon chronicle relates, that in the year 891, "three Scots from Ireland, came to King Alfred in a boat without any oars; they had stolen away because they would live in a state of pilgrimage for the love of God, they recked not where. The boat in which they came was made of two hides and a half; and they took with them provisions for seven

* Lib. IV. cap. 9.

nights, and within seven nights they came to land in Cornwall, and soon after went to king Alfred. They were named Dubslane, Macbeth, and Mælinman." From the same motives monks came from Rome into Ireland, being also drawn thither by the desire of a stricter life, or the love of sacred learning.* Bede relates of St. Hilda, "that after dedicating herself wholly to the service of God, she intended, from the province of the East Angles, to pass over if possible into France, forsaking her native country and all that she had, and there to live a stranger for our Lord, in the monastery of Celles, that so she might the more easily merit the eternal country of heaven." These motives were expressly approved of by the greatest philosophers of the middle ages. "Change of place," says St Bonaventura, "is sometimes favourable to the spiritual health of novices. In changing place they change objects which may have led them astray. Men often become better and more perfect by leaving for a time their country and their native land †." St. Jerome goes so far as to say that a monk cannot be perfect in his own country ‡. In the last book, we observed that the interests of learning were thought to require absence in a foreign country, and now it appears that a journey to strange lands was deemed no less conducive to those of a spiritual nature. The moderns are for placing the summit of virtue and happiness in domestic repose, but after all, what skills it in this voyage of life, to cast anchor and say to one's bark, "Let us rest here; behold the port which is appointed to you! here you shall sleep like an island of the sea, which the force of the bitter waves cannot disturb? On the wide seas of this world there is no port, and shipwreck alone casts us upon the shore §." St. Augustine treats at large upon the social life, and shows to how many evils and offences it is exposed, notwithstanding all the wisdom and prudence which men may bring to it ‖; and besides, he observes, "that after the example of their respective prototypes, the two cities into which the whole race of men are divided, Jerusalem and Babylon, are distinguished

* Monastic. Hiber. Introduc.
† S. Bonaventuræ Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 2.
‡ Epist. V. § De Lamartine.
‖ De Civitate Dei, Lib. XIX. cap. 5.

from each other by the former being in a state of pilgrimage, and the latter in a condition of apparent rest. Cain, whose name signified possession, founded a city earthly, having this world for its fixed resting place, established in its temporal peace and felicity; but Abel, whose name denoted grief, was a stranger and a wanderer. Seth and Enos were named after the resurrection, and the hope of those who invoke God. For thus the city of God in the time of its pilgrimage is only sustained by hope, which arises from faith in the resurrection of Christ. These are the profound views of St. Augustine*; but in a lower sense, and without reference to saints who approach perfection, it is obvious, that in a foreign country the pilgrim or scholar has more opportunity for recollection. Separated from former companions and occupations, the days of his youth come back upon him like a plaintiff strain of harmony; a tone of mourning pervades his thoughts and looks. Neither personal merit nor family connections avail him there: he is left alone, and has occasion to think upon God and on eternal truths as well as to practise humility in an eminent degree. Introduced to a different language and to different manners, his former associations are broken, and the facilities to vice are diminished: he can hardly be so profligate as to begin the abuse of new words and of new manners. Such solitude was favourable to charity. Under the strong religious impressions which it was calculated to produce, every one seemed a friend, every face was loved, every one was believed to be pious, and just, and innocent. In society it is hard to retain such a temper; hatred, suspicions, and indignation, easily enter and possess the heart. Travelling was a school of humility, when a great man would wander like Ulysses, as a poor unknown stranger. We find the son of Sirach testifying that he has travelled much, and exhorting others to follow his example †.

The ancients were not ignorant of the intellectual and moral good which resulted from leaving home, and visiting distant countries. Pythagoras, we are told, finding himself loaded with gifts and occupations of public life by his countrymen, concluded that it was most difficult to sit at home and to philosophize,

* De Civitate Dei, Lib. XV. cap. i. 17, 18.

† Ecclesiast. XXXIV. 12; XVI. 23; XXXIX. 5.

and remarked, "that all who had before him studied philosophy, had passed their lives among strangers: therefore renouncing all political administration, he departed from Samos and repaired to Italy, where he established himself in Crotona*." "Abducendus est etiam," says Cicero, speaking of him whose passions were to be corrected, "nonnumquam ad alia studia, sollicitudines, curas, negotia: loci denique mutatione, tamquam ægroti non convalescentes, sæpe curandus est†." Sophocles introduces a king, acknowledging the benefit he has received from having been educated a foreigner in a strange country, where Theseus says to Œdipus,

ὡς οἶδά γ' αὐτὸς, ὡς ἐπαιδεύθην ξένος,
ὥσπερ σὺ ——— ‡.

And when Pythagoras returned to Samos after an absence of twelve years, we are told that he was received with admiration by the seniors; for that he seemed to have brought home from his peregrination more beauty and wisdom, and greater indication of divinity §.

With respect to the Christian pilgrimages, additional reasons would result in favour of them, from considering what was the particular object in view in their institution. The desire of visiting places, associated with the memory of persons dear and venerable, is a feeling of humanity recognized in all ages by the universal race of men, and interwoven with the profoundest roots of the sentient principle of our nature. If it sprang from mere caprice or some particular error of any age, we should not find that its reasonableness could be every where and at all times understood, as we know that it is. When Chateaubriand was at Sparta, a chief of the law desired to know for what object he had come to Greece. Upon the interpreter replying that he had come to examine the ruins, the chief burst into loud laughter, and regarded him as a madman, until he added, "that he was only passing on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem," when the other exclaimed, "Kalo, kalo," making no more questions, but seeming perfectly satisfied; for all the

* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 5. † Tuscul. IV
‡ Œdip. Col. 562. § Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 5.

motives of religion are understood and respected every where. A striking instance of the intensity of this feeling is furnished by Father Bonhours, in his history of St. Francis Xavier, for he relates, "that after the death of the saint, one of the Indians who had been converted by him, and who was a most holy Christian, not content with visiting the place of his death, made a journey across an immense country, and passed the seas in order to behold the castle of Xavier. Entering the chamber where he was born, he threw himself on his knees and kissed the ground and wept, after which, without paying attention to any thing else in Europe, he returned to India, considering as a great treasure, a little piece of stone which he had picked out of the wall of the chamber*." The pilgrimages to certain abbeys like Einsiedeln, or to Shrines, as that of St. Thomas at Canterbury, were themselves facts which, by attesting the truth of ancient prodigies thus transmitted from father to son, continually excited men to greater fervour. Visiting holy places also to kiss the spot which was darkened with the blood of martyrs, or to have a more lively apprehension of the great mysteries which were consummated in Palestine, by beholding a representation of the very places in which they passed, conduced, when performed with what a certain great German author calls "the sacramental sense," from the enjoyment of which none but the race of sophists are excluded, to the experience of a kind of inspiration; and was an act which was known to be holy by its fruits. Generally, as we have already seen, the object of pilgrimages was to deliver men for a time from temporal cares and acquaintances, from the concerns of a family, and from all those solicitudes of the world which so engross the thoughts of men, that whatever they may pretend they cannot think upon God or the state of their soul, or meditate on the eternal years. It was also to give them opportunity of practising humility, the first step in the heavenly life, and of mortifying their bodies by fatigue, which of itself might overcome sensuality. The very idea too that in going perhaps this journey of three days into the wilderness, to sacrifice to the Lord their God, they were also going to a place where thousands and millions had gone before, in circumstances like their own, for the

* Lib. II. 282.

sake of their souls, and where many of them had been permanently converted to God, must have spoken to the heart in powerful language. Yet we find prudence and moderation along with the greatest fervour, as may be witnessed in the letter of Petrus Cellensis to the prior of Canterbury, where he says, "My conscience accuses and excuses me for not going to the tomb of our holy Thomas, the precious martyr of God. I am a monk, an abbot, and an old man, and as such I ought not to leave my cloister, nor neglect my temporal cares, but I should lean my staff against my fig-tree and have in mind the eternal years. It is pious to go, it is pious not to go. The journey is good which is attended with holy devotion; but the detention is religious which is joined with pious commemoration *."

It was ungentle and unjust scorn in Milton to speak of "pilgrims that strayed so far to seek in Golgotha him dead, who lives in heaven;" a sentence comprising a most false testimony and a most sophistical objection. It was well known by these men who strayed to Golgotha, that the only indispensable pilgrimage was that to our heavenly country, by the purification of the soul which might be obtained without leaving home. "Non enim," as St. Augustin says, "ad eum qui ubique præsens est locis movemur, sed bono studio bonisque moribus †." But yet in spite of Milton's incredulity, the way, to the pilgrims, might not be in vain nor unfruitful.

St. Paul desires that married persons should separate from each other for a time, and abandon the cares of wedded life, to give themselves to prayer ‡. By a pilgrimage this separation was joined with prayer, and on this ground Wittwyler, in his history of St. Meinrod and the pilgrimage of Einsiedeln, defends the practice as beneficial and holy. But it is said abuses may have followed; undoubtedly it may have been so. But where have not abuses followed? and as Tschudi a German author remarks, "that is at once the greatest abuse when men destroy what is good in order to prevent abuse." "There went," you say, "in the holy throng, men of little worth, and hypocrites most vile, who looked for nought but gold:" God alone, it is true, knows the

* Petri Cellens. Epist. Lib. VII. 21.
† De Doctrina Christiana, cap. 10. ‡ 1 Corinth. VII. 5.

pilgrim, but this uncertainty furnished no valid ground for objection against such a practice. The devil led our blessed Saviour into the holy city, and we need not marvel to find him conducting thither whom he will. "Nor," as St. Augustin says, "ought the sheep to lay aside their clothing, because wolves sometimes conceal themselves in it*." Persons, you complain, used to desert their families to go on pilgrimage; "But," says the historian of Einseideln, who wrote from experience, "did they not return better fathers, better sons, and better men? Were not the proud become humble, the weak strong, the immoral pure, and was not the temporary loss recompensed an hundred fold?"

Let it be remarked, too, that the persons who condemn the pilgrims are themselves wanderers, only differing from them in having no religious motive for their way. They are wanderers, like that hero of Paganism, who was impatient to leave the people and city of the Phœcians, and yet, no sooner is he departed, than we find him crying out, "Ah! whither have I come! Would that I had remained there with the Phœcians"—

> *αἴϑ' ὄφελον μεῖναι παρὰ φαιήκεσσιν*
> *αὐτοῦ* † . .

It is not for men, the sole of whose unblessed feet can find no rest, to speak disdainfully of the pilgrim's course, impelled by a reasonable desire, and bounded by a holy vow. Granting that the places in general to which he repaired may have had no recommendation in the estimation of the world, and of those who remain in it, what then? Cannot religion give to particular places a charm, and an importance beyond what commerce or pleasure can impart? "Men," saith Pindar, "speak of the Island of Delos, but the gods in Olympus call it, 'The far-famed star of the dark earth.'" Loretto and Walsingham make but a poor figure in the diary of an epicurean or commercial traveller; but in what a tender and hallowed light are they seen by the poor? In the year 1061, an obscure widow, inhabiting a small village, on the wild and tempestuous coast of Norfolk, by erecting a

* Lib. II. de Serm. Dom. in Monte, cap. 12.
† Od. XIII. 204.

little chapel, resembling that at Nazareth, where our blessed Lady was saluted by the angel Gabriel, is able to impart a renown to that village which extends throughout all England; and such as not all the kings of the earth combined, with all the aid of parliaments to boot, could ever have given to it. Erasmus describes Walsingham in his light manner; and yet, even from his account, one cannot help regarding it with interest:—"Not far from the sea," saith he, "about four miles, there standeth a town, living almost of nothing else but upon the resort of pilgrims. There is a college of canons there, supported by their offerings. In the church is a small chapel, but all of wood, whereunto, on either side, at a narrow and little door, are such admitted as come with their devotions and offerings. Small light there is in it, and none other but by wax tapers, yielding a most dainty and pleasant smell; nay, if you look into it, you would say it were the habitation of heavenly saints, indeed, so bright shining it is all over with precious stones, with gold and silver." Camden mentions, that princes have repaired to this chapel, walking thither barefoot. These places are now plundered, overthrown, and stigmatized, as the proper objects of scorn to men of intelligence; but is it just to prevent the poor from making their innocent journey to a cross,—to some spot, known in their annals as the far-famed star of the dark earth,—while such immense sums are squandered upon voyages of mere pleasure, to visit springs of mineral water, and brilliant cities, through idleness and vanity? Why are the pious to be condemned for seeking holy places for the sake of edification, in order that the visible and temporal may be made the means for them to gain eternity?

To the great Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, it was the custom every year for whole parishes of Switzerland to repair, in solemn procession, with cross and banners: vast numbers of nobles and princes also used to make this pilgrimage. More collected or saintly looks I never beheld than in the pilgrims whom I met along the roads leading to it. In the year 1826, there were, among these pilgrims, one hundred and fifty thousand communicants, which only exceeded by a small number the average amount every year. Pilgrims, before setting out to visit holy places, were enjoined to hear mass, in which was to be said the prayer for travellers; and, at the end, the

Roman ritual prescribed various psalms and prayers, which the priest was to repeat, in reference to them. In like manner, on their return, they were to receive a benediction, the form of which may be seen in the ritual. Of the ardour for visiting the holy land in ages of faith, there are on record many affecting instances. Raymond, a young man of Placentia, having been early impressed with a veneration for the pious pilgrims who passed through his native city, fell into a profound melancholy, of which no one could discover the cause; at last, persuaded into a confession by the bitter grief of his affectionate mother, he told her that his mourning originated in his earnest desire to visit Palestine. He had concealed his desire till now, from the fear of afflicting her; but, instead of being grieved, as he had expected, she regarded him, for a time, with silent joy, and then embraced him, saying, "I am a widow, and I may imitate the example of St. Anne, who, in her widowhood, quitted not the temple of Jerusalem, neither day nor night." Having then informed her son that she was resolved to accompany him on his holy journey, they immediately made their preparations. Previous to their departure, they received the episcopal blessing from the holy prelate of Placentia, who placed a red cross upon their breasts, and begged them to remember their country during their meritorious engagement, and to pray that it might be preserved during the calamities with which it seemed threatened by signs from heaven. They then took up their staff and scrip, and set out on their journey, accompanied, for a short distance, by their friends and neighbours. Nothing remarkable befel them on the way; but when they came in sight of Jerusalem, they are described as weeping at the remembrance of the sufferings of the Lord of Life. Their devotion, on approaching the holy sepulchre, was still more vividly excited; and as they knelt, pouring out their souls at the foot of the cross, they passionately desired that they might die there, where the Saviour himself had poured out his blood. Having visited the other sacred objects in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, they set sail for their native land; but scarcely were they embarked, when Raymond fell sick of a dangerous malady, but he soon recovered, and they arrived safely at land. No sooner, however, were they thus near the completion of their long journey, than the

fond mother was seized with a fatal illness, and expired in the arms of her son, spending her last breath in blessing him, and exhorting him to pursue a life of virtue and piety. But a far more memorable example is furnished by St. Jerome, in his immortal letters, describing the pilgrimage of St. Paula:—"Before setting out, she divided all that she possessed among her children; then she embarked, weeping, and afraid to turn her eyes towards the dear objects that she was to leave for ever. She touched at the isle of Pontia, celebrated by the exile of Flavia Domitilla, who generously confessed Christ in the persecution of Diocletian. She visited with respect the modest retreat, where this holy lady spent the long years of her martyrdom; but all her wishes were fixed upon arriving at Jerusalem, whither she hastened on the wings of faith. She passed between Charybdis and Scylla, in the Adriatic, and was obliged to stop at Mithon, to repair her exhausted strength. Thence she arrived, successively, at Cythera, at the promontory of Malea, at Rhodes, and at the island of Cyprus, where she had the consolation to find the holy Bishop Epiphanius, who retained her with him for ten days, which she employed to the glory of God, in visiting the numerous monasteries which covered this island, and every where she left abundant alms to the multitude of holy personages, whom the renown of the illustrious prelate had drawn together from all parts of the world. From thence she passed to Seleucia and to Antioch, where the Bishop Paulin detained her for some time. Thence she made a painful journey, during the depth of winter, through Phenicia and Syria. Arrived at the tower of Elias, on the banks of the Sarepta, she addressed her prayers to our Saviour Jesus Christ, and traversed the sands of Tyre. Thence she passed to Cotti, which is now called Ptolemaïde, where she entered the country of the Philistines. She saw the celebrated tower of Straton, and the house of that Cornelius who is mentioned in St. Paul's Epistles, which is now a church. She passed through Lydda, where Dorcas and Enea were raised to life by St. Peter and St. Paul. Then she saw the tower of Arimathea, to which belonged Joseph, who buried our Lord. Thence she passed by Emmaus, which is now called Nicopolis. Here the house of Cleophas is still shown: it is changed into a church. Paula remained some time at Gabaon. Thence,

leaving on the left the sepulchre of Helena, she entered Jerusalem. Now she gave proof of her great humility; for, as the proconsul of Palestine, who knew the family of the noble lady, had prepared an apartment for her in the Pretorian palace, she would have no other lodging but a little humble cell. Without taking any rest, she began to visit the holy places, with such an ardent piety, that, without the desire which pressed her to go to prostrate herself in those she had not as yet seen, she could not turn herself away from those which she beheld. O what tears did she pour forth at the foot of the cross and in the holy sepulchre! I call to witness the inhabitants of Jerusalem who were present. She then visited the citadel of Sion, and the place where the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles. After distributing all that remained to her between her servants and the poor, she departed at last for Bethlehem. She went a little out of her way to see the sepulchre of Rachel. Arriving at Bethlehem, and entering into the grotto, she contemplated the holy asylum of the queen of virgins. There I heard her say that, with the eyes of faith, she saw the divine infant, and the magi adoring, and the Virgin Mother, and the shepherds hastening to behold the Word made flesh. In the joy which accompanied her holy tears, she cried, 'Hail, Bethlehem, so worthy of thy name; House of Bread! where the Bread of Heaven deigned to descend for us. Ah! how is it possible that I, wretched sinner, should be found worthy to kiss this cradle, to pray in this cave, where the Virgin Mother deposited her Divine fruit? This shall be the place of my rest, since it is the country of my God; here will I dwell, since my God did not disdain to be born here: here will I give myself to that God who gave himself up for me.' Descending then to the tower of Ader, she saw the place where Jacob fed his flocks, and where the shepherds heard the angels singing, 'Gloria in excelsis Deo.' Thence she passed to Gaza and Bethsura, and to the house of Sara: she saw the cradle of Isaac, and the oak of Abraham. Then she passed to Chebron, called Cariath, that is, the town of the four men, because it was supposed to contain the tombs of Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, and Adam. On the following day, at the rising of the sun, she stopped on the summit of Caphar Barucha, whence she beheld the vast solitude, where once stood

the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. But I return with the illustrious traveller to Jerusalem. Paula visited the tomb of Lazarus: the house where dwelt Mary Magdalen and Martha. She then went to Jericho; and on the way thought of the good Samaritan. She stopped at the place where the blind received their sight. The next day, soon after midnight, she travelled to the banks of the Jordan; and as the first rays of the sun gilded its banks, she reflected on that Son of Justice which there began his divine mission. She contemplated with veneration the tombs of Joshua, and of Eliezer, son of Aaron; and she could not sufficiently admire this latter, which is at Gaban, in the territory of his family, because, being charged with the division of the conquered land, he had kept for his own part the country which was the most scorched and barren. She then visited Silo and Sichem. She entered a church, which has been built on the side of the mountain of Garezim, over the well of the patriarch Jacob, where our Saviour sat with the woman of Samaria. Thence she went to view the tombs of the twelve patriarchs. Weak as she was, she mounted on foot to the summit of the celebrated mountain where the prophet Abdias retired with the hundred prophets in time of persecution, living in caverns, and feeding upon bread and water. Thence she went to Nazareth, to Chanaan and Capharnaum. She saw the Lake of Tiberiad, sanctified by the honour of having borne the Lord in his navigations, and the desert where he fed the multitude. From the top of Mount Thabor she discovered the mountains of Hermon and Hermonium, and the vast plains of Galilee. She was pointed out the city of Naïn, where the widow's son was raised; but time would fail me to describe all the places which the venerable Paula was prompted to visit by piety and faith. I pass, therefore, at once into Egypt, where she visited the church which is built over the tomb of the prophet Micah. Then passing over the immense sands of the desert, where she had nothing to guide her but the print of steps, almost effaced, of the travellers who had preceded her in that perilous way, she arrived at the river Seor, and the plains of Tanis. Thence she passed to the city of No, which is now called Alexandria. She then visited Nitria, which had just recently embraced the faith of Christ. The bishop of this city, named Isidore, who had had the ho-

nour to confess his religion generously during a persecution, came out to meet her with a crowd of monks, many of whom were priests. At the sight of so many eminent personages, she rejoiced in the glory of the Lord, acknowledging herself unworthy of the honours there showed to her. Then it was that she became acquainted with the Macaires, the Arsetuses, the Serapions, and the crowd of other saints, who were the glory of Christ in these countries. She visited the holy solitaries with respect, and prostrated herself humbly at the feet of each of them. In the least of these servants of God, she thought she beheld God; and it seemed to her that the honours she rendered to them were rendered to Christ, whose image they were to her eyes. O, wonderful ardour! O, courage! almost incredible in a woman, Paula would have wished to have passed the remainder of her days with them, subject to their austere rule, if she had not been recalled to Palestine; so, embarking at Pelusa, she passed to Magunia, and thence returned to Bethlehem; where, for the first three years, she inhabited a small house, until a monastery with cells had been constructed by her orders. There, by the way-side, she built an hospital, which was always open to poor travellers in the very place where Joseph and Mary had found no asylum. Here ended her travels; and from this period (adds St. Jerome) I shall confine myself to describe the progress which she continued to make in virtue*."

The motives for visiting the holy land, as has been admitted by modern writers, were reasonable and holy; and that Rome should have been another place to which pilgrims, from every part of the world, were directed, can excite no surprise, when we consider the religious interest attached to that venerable city, and the indulgences which were extended to those who visited it with a devout intention. We find repeated mention of the pilgrimages to Rome in the Saxon Chronicle; Ina, king of Wessex, who founded the monastery of Glastonbury, afterwards went to Rome, and continued there to the end of his life. Again, in the year 709, we read that Cenred went to Rome, and Offa with him; and Cenred was there to the end of his life. Alfred sent pilgrims to Rome; for kings used often to send pilgrims thither, and

* S. Hieron. Epist. ad Eustoch.

to Jerusalem, paying their expences, as we see in the testament of René, King of Sicily, so late as in the year 1474 *. On their return, such pilgrims always carried their palms at the procession.

In the remarkable letter which Canute addressed to the bishops and nation of England, he describes, in simple and affecting language, the motives which induced him to make a pilgrimage to Rome: and it is interesting to observe how precisely similar they were to those which still actuate every devout Catholic who repairs thither. Independent of the advantage resulting to the traveller himself, there were reasons to recommend the custom of this particular pilgrimage to the judgment even of those who were politically wise: for, as Spedalieri shows, the Christian pilgrims meeting together in Rome from every country, brought back to their own land a kind of practical and personal conviction of all being children of one mother, so that afterwards every one felt within himself an additional motive for desiring to avert discord, and whatever might interrupt the concord of the common family †.

To estimate justly the disposition of the pilgrim's mind, we should consider what were the difficulties to be encountered on a journey, in the middle age, even, as Thucydides says, "by a well-girded man." It is true, nothing was then more common than travelling. What a great traveller was St. Bernard! and how many journeys did even a St. Theresa make for objects connected with the different establishments which she founded throughout Spain! We find no trace, indeed, of men and families abandoning their native land to travel over the world, through the vanity of that knight in Ariosto, who has squandered his estate, and of whom we are told,

> "Ruined, at length he thinks he will begone
> To other country, where he is unknown."

We have seen that some travelled in order to conceal their virtues, not their vices; but chivalry and the scholastic life corresponded with devotion in suggesting the advantages of travelling, like Homer, to distant nations,

* Mem. de Comines, Preuves.
† De diritti dell 'uomo, Lib. V. 5.

to study, not alone the manners, but also the laws, customs, and institutions, which prevailed in different places; and the influence of the Catholic religion, far more than the wisdom of some of the ancient sages, tended to overthrow those barriers, which national jealousies and pride have so often, and in so many countries, interposed between the mutual intercourse of men. As with the Dorians, who prohibited travelling, and excluded all foreigners, through an anxiety to keep up their national character and customs, and particularly as, under the laws of Zaleucus, who made it death to leave one's country for another. Christine de Pisan deems it greatly in praise of Louis de Bourbon, fourth brother of King Charles V. that he was a great traveller: "Moult a voyagé et esté en maintes bonnes et honnorables places *." George Chastellain could boast, in like manner, that he had travelled in France, Spain, England, and Italy; and the poet Ronsard, that he had devoted a long time to this employment.

> "J'ay long temps voyagé en ma tendre jeunesse
> Desireux de loüange, ennemi de paresse †."

It was during his travels in Germany and his visits to all the great courts of Europe, that the noble and learned Spaniard, Don Diego Savedra Faxardo, collected the materials for his admirable work on the Institutions of a Christian Prince. Like him described by Dante, nothing could overcome, in the ardent spirits of the middle age, the zeal they had to explore the world, and search the ways of life, man's evil and his virtue ‡. Homer is represented saying, that he prefers wandering to remaining in the sacred streets of Cyme:

> ——— Μέγας δέ με θυμὸς ἐπείγει
> δῆμον ἐς ἀλλοδαπῶν ἰέναι ὀλίγον περ ἐόντα §.

Petrarch, in a letter to Andrew Dondolo, doge of Venice, apologizes for his own wandering life, and says, "Heroes, philosophers, and apostles, have led the same." He might have added, that the noblest works

* Livre des fais, &c. II. chap. 14.
† Gouget, Tom. XII. 225. ‡ Hell, xxvi.
§ Epig. IV.

of human genius denote clearly that their authors were pilgrims and strangers upon earth. Chateaubriand defends the plan of his Martyrs from those who condemned it as being only that of a journey, by observing that the Odyssey is nothing but a journey; that the Æneid, the Lusiad of Camoens, the Jerusalem of Tasso, and the Telemachus of Fenelon, are also journeys, or chiefly composed of journeys. But there was still a higher consideration which moved men in the middle ages in favour of travelling,—for they remarked, that the life of our Divine Master was like a continual journey and pilgrimage. Consider how often he and his blessed mother travelled, beginning with that journey from Nazareth to the mountains of Judea, which, with the return, was a distance of twice ninety-five miles. Then there was the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem of Judea, which was ninety-six miles; from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, with the return, which was twelve miles; from Bethlehem into Egypt, which was about three hundred miles, and back again to Nazareth: from Nazareth to Jerusalem, which was ninety miles, and back again; from Nazareth to the Jordan, which was ninety-two miles. From thence to the desert, five; from the desert to Bethany, fifteen; from thence to Cana in Galilee, ninety-four; thence to Capernaum, forty-five; thence to Jerusalem, one hundred and twelve; thence to Bethbesen on the Jordan, twenty-five; thence to Sichar in Samaria, forty-four; thence to Cana, fifty; thence to Bethsaida, forty-seven; thence to Capernaum, six; thence to the Gessarenet, with the return, which was ten; thence to Jerusalem, one hundred and twelve; thence to the Lake of Genesareth, one hundred and six; thence to Capernaum, six; thence to Nain, with the return, which was one hundred miles. Thence to Nazareth, forty-seven; thence to Sephoris, fifteen; thence to Capernaum, fifty; thence to Corozaim, with the return, sixteen; thence to the confines of Tyre, fifty-five; thence to Sidon, twenty-five; thence to Capernaum, fifty-five; thence to Dalmanutha, five; thence to Bethsaida, five; thence to Cæsarea-Philippi, thirty-eight; thence to Mount Thabor, fifty-eight; thence to Capernaum, forty-five; thence to Jerusalem, with the return, which was two hundred and twenty-four; thence to Bethabara, on the Jordan, thirty-six; thence to Jerusalem by a circuit of one hundred and

twelve miles; thence to Bethany, twenty-three; thence to Ephrem, twenty; thence to Jericho, sixteen; thence to Bethany, twenty; thence to Jerusalem and back to Bethany. Then twice again from Bethany to Jerusalem, with the return thither. And lastly, the final return to Jerusalem *.

In the middle ages, the manner even of ordinary travelling had many advantages. Young nobles, of high houses, would then make their way on foot "in forma pauperis," with peasant's shoes and staff in hand. Thus would they foster habits of simplicity and endurance, and that amiable taste for the beauties of nature, which is so closely allied to many virtues. What delightful recollections were in store for him who used to rise before the sun, in order to find a more refreshing bed amidst the salt-sea billows of the Mediterranean, where, from amidst them, he would observe, thrown against the blushing sky, the dark and stately form of the pines, which line the rocky shore,—for him who used to wander beneath the marble steeps of Chiavera, or through the forests, on the shore of Chiassi, listening to the gathering melody which rolls from branch to branch, when Eolus hath loosed from his cavern the dripping south? What joy would fill his breast, when he beheld the snow-topt Apennines, like golden clouds, amidst the radiance of the rising sun; and below, far in the distance, for the first time Soracte, and the Tiber, who first unlocks near there his mighty flood, as they appear to him who descends the Mount Ciminus, journeying on his way through Ronciglione to the eternal city! What a sweet, fond theme afterwards, for such as loved him, to hear of his "moving accidents by flood and field, his hair-breadth 'scapes, and most disastrous chances that his youth had suffered." In the middle ages, even this rambling assumed a religious character. Along with their student and castle songs, *ἀνθεα ὕμνων νεωτέρων*, as Pindar says †, these young wanderers could all sweeten their thoughtful hours with repeating some hymn of holy Church, corresponding with their state. He who was first risen would leave the town before his company, and, as he passed along the shore of the placid sea, spread out, in calm majesty, like the floor of a mighty temple, when already

* Voyages de Jesus Christ. † Olymp. IX.

the rising sun darted his beams, and, with his arrowy radiance, gave fearful note of provision for the ensuing hours, he would think of the dangers that might befall him during the meridian heat; he would be reminded of the flames of anger and the sins of an impatient tongue, and then he would repeat, with audible voice, the primal hymn, which prays to God, at the rising of the star of day,

> "Linguam refrænans temperet
> Ne litis horror insonet."

It is not a mere picture of the imagination which ascribes such manners to the common traveller. In a later age the Chancellor D'Aguesau mentions, that when his father and mother used to travel, they always began by reciting the prayers of travellers, which are in the holy book of Priests.

The scenes of life too with which travelling generally familiarised men, conduced to the formation of a noble and thoughtful character. They were not led by it to associate with the wretched godless crew, which, in our own time, is annually discharged upon all the roads of Europe, from the pestilential dens of London or Paris. In general, a modern traveller is only transported from city to city, and from inn to inn, where the same atmosphere, the same dissipation, the same discourse, the same faces, accompany him: he is escorted frequently by atheists and epicures, as if by demons—

> "Ah, fearful company! but in the Church
> With saints, with gluttons at the tavern's mess *."

A wanderer in the middle ages, like Dante, might be traced, in his devious course, to an assembly in the sacristy of some Church, or to some knightly castle among the mountains, or to a chamber in some monastery, in a wild and solitary region, or to a tower of some lord near a river, or to a rock adjoining some castle, on which he used to sit, or to a palace of some splendid patron of learned men, or to some banquet hall in the house of some illustrious senator. These journeys had

* Dante, Hell, xxii.

even occasionally the character of a pilgrimage. Peruthgarius, son of Theodald, attached to the court of Count Gerald, being dispatched on a journey by that nobleman, and coming near the Church of the Martyrs, in the town of Kentibrut in Thurgau, was admonished by his page, who here showed himself no Pythagorean, to turn aside a little from the road, for the sake of prayer *. Express and avowed pilgrimages were, however, many of the journeys of the lay nobility. In the Mortuary Hall on the dead body of the knight, which was there exposed, used always to be placed his sword and the staff of pilgrimage, which he had borne to different places during his life †.

Thus far there might seem to be no reason for concluding that the life of a traveller, in the middle ages, had any connection with the character of mourners; but if we consider it with more attention, we shall find that not only, like other occupations of men, it was mixed with joy and sorrow, but that the latter must have predominated at least with the greater part of those who engaged in it. Young men, indeed, may have always rejoiced at the prospect of undertaking a perilous journey, through the same spirit which made the Athenian youth so eager to sail for Sicily: "the desire of seeing distant lands," καὶ ἐυέλπιδες ὄντες σωθήσεσθαι, as Thucydides says ‡. No sooner returned than they may have been ready to second the proposal of Laertes: "My thoughts and wishes bend again towards France." But no such spirit or encouragement can we ascribe to the pilgrim who left his home and country through penitence and who was often of advanced years, and already bowed down with the weight of calamity. "In the age of the Crusades," says Bonald, "men endeavoured to expiate crimes which were easy to commit, by virtues which were painful to practise §." We must remember that, after all, the feudal life was especially domestic and sedentary. Long voyages, by men of mature age, were rare, and under all circumstances, painful and difficult. A journey from one province to another was a great enterprise. Hénault relates, that the monks of Saint Maur-des-Fossés, near Paris, excused themselves from going into

* Mabillon, Acta Ord. S. Bened. Sæc. IV. 5.
† Tristan, Tom. V. 134.
‡ Lib. VI. 24.
§ Legislation Primitive, III. 275.

Burgundy, "on account of the length and dangers of the journey." Thomas Poucyn, elected Abbot of Canterbury in the year 1334, travelling to Avignon to receive the Pope's benediction, arrived there after a journey of three weeks and three days, of which the expences came to the sum of twenty-one pounds eighteen shillings. Frequently men had to travel over lands without a road, and through a people speaking a multitude of different idioms. It was not till the thirteenth century that some inns began to be found in Italy. Hence, before going on a journey, men went to confession. Thus Alcuin writes to Dametas: "Make safe your journey by confession, and remember to guard it by alms*." St. Anselm writes in like manner to his brother, Burgundius, who was going to Jerusalem: "I advise and entreat you not to carry your sins with you, but get rid of them effectually by a general and exact confession of all your offences from your youth†." Since thou hast far to go, bear not along the clogging burden of a guilty soul.

Abbot Rodulf, in the beginning of the twelfth century, describes his journey across those Alps, which saw pass, in the eleventh, that terrible red flag of the children of Rollo, which was to put to flight the eagles of the eastern empire. It was in winter, on his return from Rome, and scarcely, he says, was the suffering endurable by the human body. "We were detained at the foot of the Mount Jove ‡, in a village called Restopolis, from which we could neither advance nor retreat in consequence of the quantity of snow which had fallen. At length 'the Maroniers,' or guides, conducted us as far as St. Remi, which is on the same mountain, where we found a vast multitude of travellers; and where we were in danger of death from the repeated falls of whole tracts of snow from the rocks above us. We remained some days in this unhappy village, till at length the guides said that they would lead on, but demanded a heavy price. Their heads and hands were guarded with skins and fur, and their shoes armed with iron nails, to prevent them from slipping on the ice, and they carried long spears in their hands, to feel their way along over the snow. It was very early in the morning, and with great fear and trem-

* Alcuini Epist. XLVI.

† S Anselmi Epist. Lib. III. 66.

‡ Great St. Bernard.

bling the travellers celebrated and received the holy mysteries, as if preparing themselves for death. They contended with each other who should first make his confession; and since one priest did not suffice, they went about the Church confessing their sins to each other. While these things were passing within the Church with great devotion, there was a lamentable shout heard in the street—for the guides who had left the town to clear the way, were suddenly buried under a great fall of the snow, as if under a mountain. The people ran to save them, and pulled them out,—some dead, some but half alive, others with broken limbs. Upon this, we all returned to Restopolis, where we passed the Epiphany. Upon the weather clearing, we again set out, and succeeded happily in passing the profane mount of Jove *."

In these holy pilgrims, the spirit of self-denial and mortification was continually put to the test. St. Aderal of Troyes, in the tenth century, made twelve pilgrimages to Rome in honour of the apostles, travelling the entire way on foot: and once being obliged to pass a swollen river, he boldly entered the torrent, and swam across. He passed the Apennines in a season of intense cold, barefooted, that he might suffer something for Jesus Christ, and each time that he crossed the Alps, he beat the rocks with bare feet †. One of the old chronicles, relating the crusade of Frederic Barbarossa, says, that to paint the sufferings and the heroic resignation of the crusaders, would require the tongue of an angel. Such pilgrims did not resemble these modern travellers, who would all follow Hercules to the infernal regions in search of the poets, but, like Bacchus, taking especial care to bargain for a way that was neither too hot nor too cold ‡. Their's was a way over the cold Alp, the nurse of snows through all the year, and through scorching deserts, where every shape of painful death surrounded them. Nicephorus relates that Evagrius came to Macarius the Anchorite, about the meridian hour, asking for some cold water, being quite exhausted with

* Chronic. Abbatiæ S. Trudonis, Lib. XII. p. 496, apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. VII.

† Desguerrois, Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 250.

‡ Aristoph. Ranæ, 119.

the heat and fatigue, to whom Macarius placidly replied, "My son, be content with the shade; for many travellers and navigators are this moment wanting it *."

Nor were sufferings wanting even in nearer lands. Many a pilgrim to Camaldoli might mourn while traversing those desolate scorched hills of broken earth, where wretched peasants spread before the sun, to be dried on the slaty bed of torrents, the little corn yielded by that ungracious soil. Hastening on their way to invoke God at the shrines of saints, these poor pilgrims would come to rivers, where they would have to give their last loaf to be transported across, having nothing else left to offer †. When a noble left his ancestral hall on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, if he had enemies they might rejoice, and say, like the suitors of Penelope, when they heard that Telemachus was setting out, "that he went to perish far from his friends, wandering alone like his father." They might indulge such a hope; for there were not wanting grounds to make it highly probable that it would be realized. William, Duke of Guyenne, was a proud violent prince, abandoned to all kinds of profligacy, and so haughty, that he seemed to look down upon the greatest nobles. He chose to recognise the antipope Anaclet, notwithstanding the efforts of St. Bernard and of the Bishop of Soissons, who in vain endeavoured to draw him from the schism. St. Bernard after retiring for some time to his Abbey of Châteliers, wrote from there to the duke, ordering him to come to him. Though this letter was little respectful in appearance, it produced the effect intended. The duke, immediately on receiving it, set out for the abbey, where the saint, after receiving him with all the honours due to his rank, proceeded to remonstrate with him without sparing him, speaking to him, during the seven days that he retained him, with such force, of death, the last judgment, and the pains of hell, that William appeared touched to the quick, and departed in the best dispositions. After some relapses, he was at length finally converted to a holy life. So, after making a devout testament, he resolved to set out on a pilgrimage to Compostella: and in such obscurity did he travel, that,

* Lib. XI. c. 43, Hist. Eccles.

† Mabillon, Acta Ordinis S. Bened. Sæc. IV. 5.

after leaving his states, he was never more heard of. Suger supposed that he died on the road. All that is known for certain respecting him is, that, after traversing Biscay and the north of Castille, he reached the city of Leon; but beyond that, all was conjecture. The general opinion was, that God took him to himself towards the end of the first Lent of his pilgrimage, and that he received the viaticum on Good Friday. Many were the pilgrims who thus perished without ever having seen the day of return, the *νόστιμον ἦμαρ*, or without any thing having been ever heard of the manner, or place, or time of their death.

If Eurylochus, in Homer, departed weeping, though along with two and twenty companions, how must he have mourned, who had to set out, through unknown ways, alone! The sign of mourners was even prescribed to be worn by those who had charge of receiving the pilgrims, as at Paris in the Hospital of St. Jaques-du-haut-Pas, founded by Galligus, guardian of another house of the same order in Italy; for there the members were enjoined to wear the sign of Tau woven upon their breasts. Well, then, might one of these pilgrims hear words of affection addressed him on his departure like those which were directed to retain Telemachus. "Dear child! what hath filled your mind with this desire? Wherefore, beloved, do you wish to go alone over much of the earth?

——— *ἰέναι πολλὴν ἐπὶ γαῖαν*
μοῦνος ἐών *.

Remain at home and enjoy what you possess. There is no necessity for you to suffer evils on the cruel sea, or to wander thus

——— *οὐδέ τί σε χρὴ,*
πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον κακὰ πάσχειν οὐδ' ἀλάλησθαι."

His reply, if made, as it well might be, in the Virgilian line, would not seem to deny the justice of ranking him as a mourner.—

* Odyssey, II. 363.

" Vivite felices, quibus est fortuna peracta
Jam sua: nos alia ex aliis in fata vocamur *."

We read in the Life of Lietbertus, Bishop of Cambray, that when that holy bishop had resolved upon making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in the year 1054, setting out from his city of Cambray, he was accompanied for three miles by a multitude of people of both sexes and of all ages, who took leave of him with sighs and tears †.

Those who remember with what horror a sea voyage was contemplated during the middle ages by the greatest part of those who travelled through devotion, can easily appreciate the degree of constancy which they must have possessed to undertake it. Perfectly in the style of Homer was their constant exclamation,

τίς δ' ἂν ἐκὼν τοσσόνδε διαδράμοι ἁλμυρὸν ὕδωρ
ἄσπετον;

When the king St. Louis and his host had embarked at Marseilles, Joinville describes how the priests and clerks came upon the deck, and " began, with all the ship's company, to sing aloud the 'Veni Creator Spiritus.' Then the sailors, while singing, spread out the sails in the name of God, and the wind soon filling them, we began to make way, and soon lost sight of land, and saw only the water and the sky. 'Et par ce veulx-je bien dire, (continues the brave Joinville) que icelui est bien fol, qui sceut avoir aucune chose de l'autrui, et quelque péché mortel en son âme, et se boute en tel dangier. Car si on s'endort au soir, l'on ne scest si on se trouvera au matin au sous de la mer.' " Undoubtedly the pilgrim who returned from Jerusalem, or from some other distant land, bearing his branch of palm, and then placing it as an offering on the altar of the Church of his home, coming back alone after wandering for ten years, like Telemachus, or perhaps for twenty, like his great father, suffering many woes, might now with good reason have been felicitated as a man peculiarly favoured, to whom it was not destined, as Mercury says to Calypso of Ulysses, to perish far from his companions, but to whom it was still reserved to see once more his friends,

* Æneid, Lib. III. 493.

† Vita Lietberti, Episc. Cameracensis, cap. 31, apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IX.

and to come to his lofty-battlemented house, and to his father-land *. Guizot, in affirming that the crusades could have involved the chivalry of Europe in no painful service, because they required no change of life from men who were always roving, seems to forget the express testimony of history to the mourning and affliction of the crusaders in leaving their homes for these expeditions, which they undertook as a work meritorious.—Thus we behold one of them only persuaded after a long conversation with St. Bernard, who speaks to him on the passion of Christ, till, dissolved in a flood of tears, he conquers his preference of house and land, and resolves to take up the cross. Joinville, in quitting his home, cannot endure the sight of his ancestral towers, and so keeps his face turned from them.

But among the instances on record of the penitential spirit in which many of the crusaders departed for the Holy Land, there is none more striking than that of William, Count of Poitiers, who speaks as follows, before setting out for Palestine: "I wish to compose a chant, and the subject shall be that which causes my sorrow. I go into exile beyond sea, and I leave my beloved Poitiers and Limousin. I go beyond sea to the place where pilgrims implore their pardon. Adieu, brilliant tournaments! adieu, grandeur and magnificence, and all that is dear to my heart! Nothing can stop me. I go to the plains where God promises remission of sins. Pardon me, all you my companions, if I have ever offended you. I implore your pardon. I offer my repentance to Jesus, the master of heaven: to him I address my prayer. Too long have I been abandoned to worldly distractions; but the voice of the Lord has been heard. We must appear before his tribunal. I sink under the weight of my iniquities."

I am not ignorant, indeed, with what bitter scorn and insulting censure the modern writers speak of the influence which occasioned this wondrous progress of nations to the East; but neither am I in doubt respecting their unreasonableness in so doing. Pope Urban II. in the Council of Claremont, conceding the indulgence to all who should join the enterprise which was to deliver Jerusalem from the yoke of the Saracens, made this pro-

* Hom. Od. V. 114.

vision, which is read in the second canon: "Quicunque pro sola devotione, non pro honoris vel pecuniæ adeptione, ad liberandam ecclesiam Dei Jerusalem profectus fuerit, iter illud pro omni pœnitentia ei reputetur."—"Can one conceive, (asks Guizot,) that at present a people of proprietors would all of a sudden abandon their property and family, and leave their homes, without an absolute necessity, to seek such distant adventures? Nothing of this kind (he adds) would have been possible, had not the daily life of the possessors of fiefs been a kind of training for the crusades *." Nor would it have been possible then, he might have added, if religion had not imparted a sanctity to mourning, and taught men to embrace such sufferings as meritorious. Besides, without taking into account what this author had elsewhere admitted, that the feudal life was favourable to domestic habits, and to the importance of women, it is a manifest truth, that by a law of nature and the very constitution of the human mind, men in general, with the exception of certain peculiar tribes, must in every age be similarly affected with regard to the love of home and of country. To be driven out from one's native land—a wanderer among foreign nations—seemed to the Greeks a greater punishment than death, and to be the appropriate penalty for an impious man †. Before the influence of the universal Church had counteracted the pride and cruelty of the national spirit, which alienated man from man, the condition of a foreigner was truly wretched. St. Augustin says, that a man would rather keep company with his dog, than with another man who did not understand the language which he spoke ‡. And even had it been otherwise, who could be insensible to the feelings expressed by Hippolytus, when he bids adieu to the land of his birth, the scene of his youthful sports, and the witness of his happy days? The Catholic religion, notwithstanding the universality of its sphere of action, had not destroyed or diminished these feelings. St. Ambrose, speaking of the eminent virtues of the patriarch Abraham, remarks in the first place the command which he received to go forth from his country, and

* Discours sur l'Hist. Mod. Tom. IV. 5.
† Eurip. Hippolyt. 1050.
‡ De Civitate Dei, Lib. XIX. cap. 7.

from his acquaintances, and from his father's house, and then he adds, "It would have been sufficient to say from thy country," but the rest was added in order to prove his affection *. "Why do you fly?" asks St. Ambrose, addressing those who dreaded the advance of the barbarians "Perhaps," he continues, "you fear captivity. Do you not know that this is the greatest captivity, not to behold your country? And what can be more grievous than the banishment of a journey †?" How well is that described by the great poet—who passed so many years of his own life in wandering—where, describing the first glimmering dawn, he adds,

——— "That breaks
More welcome to the pilgrim still, as he
Sojourns less distant on his homeward way ‡."

St. Bernard, in the age of the greatest fervour for pilgrimages, in the age of the crusades, himself the preacher of the crusade, reckons the love of our country among the fruits of justice §. Judge then from all this, whether the pilgrim in distant lands, who could say of himself, like Ulysses, that he had never entered his country since he first followed Godfrey or Richard to Jerusalem to help the Christians, but had always been wandering full of sorrows, that his constant wishes and expectation were, to arrive at his home, and to see the day of return—

οἴκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι ||.

Whether, I say, this pilgrim, be he layman or priest, knight or palmer, ought not to have been reckoned among the tribe of mourners?

But let us note some details relative to the manner of their journey, and to the consolations afforded them on the way.

Before setting out, the pilgrim provided himself with a commendatory letter, called a letter of communion, which was composed so as to prevent the possibility of

* S. Ambros. Lib. de Abrah. Patriarch.
† S. Ambrosii Serm. LXXXV. ‡ Purg. XXVII.
§ De Ordine Vitæ. || Odyss. V. 220.

its being forged. These letters used to be given, not only to all clerks who travelled to a different diocese, and who, by the canons of the Council of Tours, in the year 461, were prohibited from travelling without them, but also to all laymen, in evidence of their being at peace with the Church: for, as Optatus Milevitanus says, "The whole world was formed into one society and communion *." Thus the testimonial of Catholic faith answered to the *σύμβολα*, or Tessera of the ancients, which were tokens of hospitality, made so that a person, by producing one piece, might be recognised by another who had its corresponding part. Jason tells Medea that he will give her these symbols to insure for her an hospitable reception from his friends in the country to which she is going †. Thomassinus alludes to this subject in treating on hospitality, to whose observations the reader may refer.

Humility, simplicity, and charity, characterised the pilgrim's way. In the old fabliaux of the two rich citizens and the labourer, the former going on a pilgrimage, and being joined by a peasant, they all three travel on lovingly together, and join their provisions in a common stock. The duty of the Teutonic knights as pilgrims was denoted on the seal of their order, which represented the mother of Christ seated on an ass, holding the infant Jesus in her arms, with Joseph walking and leading the animal, the star going before them as when they fled into Egypt ‡. Little difficulties were not to interrupt the course. "The morning rain stops not the pilgrim," is the proverb we have derived from these ages. In the rules given to the Knight Templers, they were directed to travel two or three together, and when they came to any place in which there was a house belonging to the order, they were obliged to take up their lodging there with the brethren, and they were directed to provide themselves with a light, which should be kept burning during the night near where they slept. "When you go on a journey, (says St. Bonaventura) live in great peace with him whom the superior will have given to you for a companion. Never engage in any dispute with him,

* Vide Joan. Devoti Institut. Canonic. Lib. II.

† Eurip. Medea, 613.

‡ Voigt Geschichte Preussens, II. 57.

although you should be in the right, but yield to him with tranquillity, and keep silence, because it is seldom that any one is convicted by disputing, or made to change his opinion. Preserve your own peace, that you may give peace to others, and begin by appeasing yourself, and then you may appease him; because, what you would say in trouble and agitation to him who is troubled and agitated, would only trouble and agitate him the more; and you will more easily win him by your gentleness and patience, than by all the reasons you could allege: for virtue is not taught by vice, nor humility by pride. Be accommodating and agreeable on the journey, but without dissipation or compromise of your duty *."

Monks, like minor friars, were bound to travel two and two. On their way they were commanded to show respect to every one, and to salute all strangers whom they met, to take every occasion of consoling, instructing, and edifying those in whose company they found themselves, and never to show harshness or rudeness in reproving such as acted wrong in their presence; but to admonish them with gentleness and humility, so that in this way going through the world, they might literally accomplish the order of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to every creature. St. Martin converted a robber who happened to travel along with him. They were always to endeavour to arrive at the place of sleeping before late, that there might be no hurry to themselves or inconvenience to their hosts †. Monks on a journey were advised to take little books with them, and Mabillon describes the volumes for this purpose, which were in a monastery of Cistercians. St. Gregory the Great says, "that the Abbot Æquitius used to carry sacred pages in leather cases on each of his sides." There were books expressly composed for the pilgrims, containing prayers, and hymns, and litanies suitable to their engagement. The moral work entitled Le Dialogue du Crucifix et du Pélerin was written by one of these pilgrims, William Alexis, the humble prior of the monastery of Bury, in the diocese of Evreux. He wrote it in the year 1486, at the request, as he says himself, of some pilgrims of Rouen, who were with him on the holy voyage, for their spiritual

* S. Bonaventuræ de Reformat. Hominis exter. cap. 36.
† S. Bonaventuræ Speculum Novitiorum, cap 29. 31.

consolation, and to excite them to devotion and patience." Gouget observes, "that it is a most pious work, and that the author had always in view the engagements of his state *." Companies of pilgrims travelling together recited the psalms and sung litanies on the way.

St. Gerard, bishop of Toule, made a pilgrimage to Rome for the sake of devotion. So leaving not a little substance for the support of the poor, he set out on his journey with twelve companions of the clerical and monastic order, who with him might continually chant psalms or jubilations. They seemed to make the whole road to Rome one church, the standard of the cross always preceding them. Who could describe the abundant alms which they dispensed on the way? Upon arriving at Pavia, they were received by the holy Maiolus abbot of Cluny †, and the blessed Adhelbert, who was afterwards a martyr ‡. "O what spiritual exultation was theirs! What conversation on the supernal kingdom ever to be desired! What divine discourse upon the divine word! Each hung upon the other's lips. Each believed that he heard Christ in the other, who certainly dwelled in them §." When pious travellers entered a town, they used to visit first all the places of devotion which it contained; then they used to offer their alms to the hospitals, and serve the poor that were in them. In the time of Petrarch, when the emperor Charles and the empress came to Rome to be crowned on Easter Sunday, arriving there on Maunday Thursday, on the two following days, he visited the churches in a pilgrim's habit. Many travellers of the modern school feel themselves strangers and aliens as they pass through the nations of the Catholic church, and seem as if never to be at ease, or capable of perfect refreshment, till they arrive at that little city of Calvin, where the law at present forbids men to proclaim the divinity of Christ; but the pilgrim of the middle ages had the consolation of finding his home in every church which he passed on the way.

* Bibliotheque Francais Tom. X. 119.

† Who ruled from the year 948 to 994.

‡ Bishop of Prague, crowned with martyrdom in the year 997.

§ Acta Tullensium Episcoporum apud Marten. Thesaur. Anecdot. Tom. III.

Every where he found the same holy rites, the same language which had been familiar to him from childhood. Did his heart for a moment fail at the thought of his course being unaccomplishable, and did the memory of home and the prospect of danger prompt him to return without seeing the place of his desire? in prayer, at the foot of the altar, he gathered fresh strength and courage to continue on his way, for he felt as if he were then but for the first moment setting out from home. The Missa Sicca or Nautica used to be celebrated on ship-board. When St. Louis was a prisoner in the hands of the Sarassins, he had a Missa Sicca celebrated in his presence. The rubric prescribed that the priest should be clad as usual in the sacred vestments; that he should read the mass till the preface; that the canon was to be omitted; that the pater-noster was then to be said; but that all the secrets were to be omitted, and that neither chalice nor host was to be on the altar. In later ages Pope Benedict XIV. gave permission to have mass said on board the ships of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, provided the sea was calm and the sky serene *. Guido de Monte Rocherii, who wrote about the year 1333, approves of the custom of celebrating a Missa Sicca before travellers who should arrive late and after the priest had said his mass. In this case he says, "that the priest after reading the mass of the day, should show relics instead of continuing the canon." Even in desolate and benighted regions, religion supplied the wanderer with an idea which served as a substitute for home: for, as the Athenian general said to his soldiers in his affecting speech on the retreat from Syracuse, "that they were to consider it as if they themselves, wherever they happened to rest on the way, immediately constituted the city†," so these bands of Catholic pilgrims, when they had to traverse infidel lands, were consoled with remembering, that wherever the hand of Providence might conduct their steps, they were themselves holy Sion and the walls of Jerusalem.

Bounty to the poor was the virtue more than all others pre-eminently to distinguish the pilgrims, who never forgot that it was when travelling, the good Samaritan

* Benedict. XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ II. 48.
† Lib. VII. 77.

practised that memorable work of charity, and that a hostel was the scene of it. The joy and devotion expressed by pilgrims on first coming in sight of Jerusalem or Rome, or the temple of their vow, was a subject which has employed the genius of the noblest poets and painters. Clarke thus describes his first view of Jerusalem: "'Hagiopolis!' exclaimed a Greek in the van of our cavalcade, and instantly throwing himself from his horse, was seen upon his knees bare-headed. Suddenly the sight burst upon us all. The effect produced was that of perfect silence throughout the whole company. Many of our party, by an immediate impulse, took off their hats as if entering a church, without being sensible of so doing. The Greeks and Catholics shed torrents of tears; presently beginning to cross themselves with unfeigned devotion, they asked if they might be permitted to take off the covering from their feet, and proceed bare-footed to the holy sepulchre. We had not been prepared for the grandeur of the spectacle which the city alone exhibited." So also we read, "that after the first transports of joy on beholding Jerusalem, deep repentance succeeded through the whole host of the crusaders, for Tasso, at this point, closely follows history.

"Scantly they durst their feeble eyes dispread
Upon that town, where Christ was sold and bought;
Where, for our sins, he, faultless, suffer'd pain,
There where he died, and where he liv'd again.
Soft words, low speech, deep sobs, sweet sighs, salt tears,
Rose from their breasts, with joy and pleasure mixt:
For thus fares he the Lord aright that fears,
Fear on devotion, joy on faith is fix't:
Their naked feet trod on the dusty way,
Following th' ensample of their zealous guide;
Their scarfs, their crests, their plumes and feathers gay,
They quickly doft, and willing laid aside *."

The hill whence the pilgrims gain the first view of St. James of Compostello, is called Montjoye, or Mons Gaudii. The number and devotion of the pilgrims at various holy places would be so great, that whole towns used to spring up and be established in consequence. At St. Maur, it used to be a great privilege to the inhabi-

* Book III.

tants who alone had the right to sell candles to the pilgrims for the procession *. The greatest concourse was always at the principal festival, celebrated at that particular place. Never shall I lose the memory of the devout multitude which flocked to the Seraphic mountain of Alvernio, when that simple and joyous family of Christ, dwelling there in great innocence, and ministering in all things to strangers, commemorated the stigmata of its blessed founder. Thither came men and women, old and young, rich and poor, and all entered as if it were into their own house, so sure was the humblest pilgrim of receiving food, and fire, and welcome. Then when the bell sounded for the first vespers, this throng of pilgrims which had filled the courts, and cloisters, and corridores, and halls of the convent, hastened into the church, where they met before the altar like one family. On the evening of the next day, which closed the pious solemnity, these pilgrims descended from the mountain, if not like St. Francis bearing the signs of our redemption on their bodies, yet assuredly as far as one could judge from their saintly looks and by their whole demeanour, having the cross in their hearts imprinted by the Spirit of God. Sometimes, without regard to particular festivals, the penitential seasons of the ecclesiastical year were spent in these pious journeys. King Robert of France used to spend whole Lents on pilgrimages.

With respect to the assistance afforded to pilgrims on their way, there are some facts which deserve notice. In the eye not only of religion but of the state, they were privileged persons. In the remarkable letter of Canute to the bishops and nation of England, after describing his pilgrimage to Rome, he mentions having taken occasion to obtain from the emperor Conrad and other princes, an exemption for all his subjects who should make the pilgrimage to Rome, that they might not be detained at the barriers, nor subjected to any exactions on their way. "As for pilgrims," says a capitulary of Pepin-le-bref, "who make a pilgrimage with a view to God, let no toll be demanded from them *." In the year 1358, Rudolph Archduke of Austria and Lord of Rappersweil, undertook the amazing work of erecting a bridge over the lake of

* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. V.

† Cap. Pipp. A. 755. Baluz. Tom. I. Col. 175.

Zurich, though the breadth in that place is eighteen hundred paces. This was done in order to assist the pilgrims who were travelling to Einsiedelin, as they used frequently to be prevented from crossing the lake by storms which opposed the fulfilment of their pious vows *. The erection of hostels for the reception of pilgrims was a work of charity to which communities and individuals devoted themselves. Cities and private persons made foundations to procure asylums for their fellow townsmen in places of pilgrimage, or for such as were on their way thither. In the year 1752, the magistrates of Avignon wrote to the council of Rheims, to say that every native of Rheims or of Champagne passing by their city had a right to be nourished during three days, and to receive an ecu on proceeding forward †. At Lille, we read of two ancient hospitals for the pilgrims. There were five at Douai, and there was one at each of the towns of Orchies, Armentiers, and Seclin, where the grey sisters and other pious persons exercised hospitality ‡. In the year 1353, several hostels were founded at Einsiedelin, for the gratuitous reception of pilgrims, rich and poor, who were all to be received without respect of persons, for God's sake §. At Freyburg, in Switzerland, shortly after entering the city from the side of Germany, and before ascending the steep hill, you see the small ancient hostel for the pilgrims of St. James of Compostello. The image of a pilgrim with his bottle, cockle hat, and staff, stands in a gothic niche over the door. At Paris there was the hospital of St. James to receive pilgrims who should be going to Compostello. Some thought that it had been founded by Charlemagne, but it was not established till the year 1315, and it was the work of some Parisians, who, having made this pilgrimage, and wishing to perpetuate the memory of it, formed themselves into a fraternity. Every year on the first Monday after the festival of St. James the Greater, the brethren assembled in the church of the hospital, and made a solemn procession with the staff of a pilgrim in one hand and a lighted taper in the other. Over the gate of this hospital of St.

* Einsiedlische Chronik by Tschudi 73.
† Anquetil, Hist. de Rheims, Lib. III.
‡ Hist. des Saints de Lille, Douai, &c. 672.
§ Tschudi Einsiedlische Chronik, 69.

James, was the following inscription: "Nullos fundatores ostento, quia humiles, quia plures, quorum nomina tabella non caperet, cœlum recipit; vis illis inseri? vestem præbe, panem frange pauperibus peregrinis *." In the great hospital of the Knights of St. John, at Paris, there was an immense square tower which contained four vast halls, one over the other, furnished with beds for the pilgrims of Jerusalem, and for the sick who asked hospitality †. At Milan, Barnabo Visconti founded an hospice for the entertainment of pilgrims. At Rome, besides the vast hospital for pilgrims where every one is received, there were a multitude of similar foundations, though of a confined nature, which were of great antiquity. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit still bears a name from its proximity to the hospice which had been founded for their countrymen by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Alfred was the founder of this house, which, on the change of religion in England, was converted by the Catholics into a college. The French had also their hospitium for French pilgrims; and there was an hospitium for foreign secular priests of all nations who should be travelling. But, as connected with great events and illustrious titles, no foundation was so remarkable as the Pilgrim's Hospital at Jerusalem, which gave rise to a renowned order, whose fame must endure as long as the world lasts. The Bull of Pope Honorius III., speaks of it in these terms: "Those who, with various perils by sea, visit, through devotion, the holy city, and the sepulchre of our Lord, know well how dear to God, and how venerable to men, is that place which affords an agreeable and useful asylum for strangers, and for the poor in the German Hospital of St. Mary at Jerusalem: for there the indigent and the poor are refreshed, obsequious attention is paid to the sick, and they who have been fatigued by divers labours and dangers are restored and refreshed; and in order that they may proceed with greater security to the holy places, sanctified by the corporal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, there are brethren especially appointed, at the expense of that hospital, to wait upon them."

The hostels, or inns, which have succeeded in most places to these ancient foundations of charity, have, in

* De Saint-Victor, Tableau de Paris, Tom. II. p. 490.
† Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, I. 6.

Catholic countries, still retained an aspect which gives them an interest in the estimation of devout or of romantic travellers. The innkeeper of the middle ages took care to have holy images in the apartments of his hostel for his guests. There was a room, or at least a table, separate for persons who were excommunicated*. All which did not prevent persons from fancying that there were some inns which the demon had kept, and which were served by his imps. The very signs of inns continued to favour the idea that every journey was a pilgrimage; for such were the associations connected with images of the three kings, of the flight into Egypt, and of the pilgrim, which were so generally placed over the gate to invite the traveller to pull his rein. At Bacione, the last stage to Rome, there is a lone huge inn, which, from the throng and variety of guests, may remind one of a pilgrims' hostel; and on the bleak, wild mountain of Radicoffani, there is another solitary inn, in which is a chapel, where mass is said. Arriving here on the festival of St. Michael, I had the happiness of finding that a priest was just arrived for the purpose of saying mass, and all the people of the inn proceeded to assist at it with great devotion. Arriving about the Ave Maria, at any inn in the states of the church, where one so often meets companies of ecclesiastics travelling, the sound of their solemn voices, repeating their holy office aloud, seems to impart to the inn the sanctity of a cloister, and consoles the solitary pilgrim, who can feel himself as if domesticated under a holy roof; while the sacred dramatic show, which sometimes succeeds during supper, completes the charm, at least in the estimation of one who seeks in travelling, not luxury, but the simple and holy manners of the antique world. Lord Marmion's train arriving at the hostel where the palmer sits by the fire, furnishes the poet with a picture, of which the colouring denotes a more northern clime, though the substance is familiar to us all—

> "Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
> With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;
> Soon by the chimney's merry blaze,
> Through the rude hostel might you gaze;

* Monteil, Hist. des Français, Tom. III. 487.

Might see where, in the dark nook aloof,
The rafters of the sooty roof
Bore wealth of winter cheer;
Of sea-fowl dried, and Soland's store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savoury haunch of deer.

But not merely in the inns and hostels was the pilgrim a welcome guest: every where alike, whether to the cottage, or to the castle, he might direct his steps, at any hour of the day or night, and feel secure of meeting with a kind reception. No where in a Catholic land would he find the *φυγόξενον*, whom Pindar mentions; nor the "stranger-hating house," which Admetus speaks of in the Greek play. As in the primitive days of Christian society, if a stranger showed that he professed the orthodox faith, and was in the communion of the Church, he was received with open arms wherever he went. To have refused him entrance would have been thought the same thing as to have rejected Jesus Christ himself *. Even without any knowledge of his character, the wanderer was admitted to hospitality; and the general sentiment of the host, on such occasions, may be learned from chivalrous tales, as from that of Gyron le Courtois; for we read there, that when Danayn le Roux and his varlet were riding one night in the forest, they espied a fire in the distance, and coming up to it, they found that it came from a tent, in which a knight was lodging with his company. The squire went up to the knight in the tent, and said, "Sir knight, here is a knight all armed, and we do not know what he wishes to say." "Bien soit il venu," replied their lord, "par advanture vouldra il ceste nuyte demourer avecques nous. Se il est preudhomme, moult en suis lye et joyeux de sa compaignie avoir, et se il est autre, Dieu le conseille. Sa bonte le conduyra, et sa mauvaistrie luy demourra quant il se partira de nous †." The church took the lead here. St. Hildegard styles Pope Eugene, "The Father of Strangers ‡." In fact, at Rome, on Maunday Thursday, the holy father shows himself the servant of strangers, repairing to the hospital of the poor pilgrims, who have come thither from every clime, and there humbly minis-

* Benedict XIV. De Canonizatione Servorum Dei, Lib. I.
† F. 411. ‡ S. Hildegardi Epist. I.

tering to wash their feet. To secure the protection, not alone of pilgrims, but of all persons who travelled through the world, was a constant object of solicitude with the Holy See, and various councils raised their solemn voice to further it, in opposition to local abuses, and even to the civil legislation. Vincent of Beauvais cites a Council of Lateran, which says, "They who with damnable cupidity pillage the substance of Christians suffering shipwreck, whom, by the rule of faith, they are bound to assist, become subject to excommunication, unless they restore what they have taken. Nothing must be taken from shipwrecked persons, whether found on sea or on shore; nor will any custom, statute, or prescription, excuse offenders in this case; for it is against the precept of our Lord, who says, 'Do unto others what you would they should do unto you*.'"

In the year 1377, Archbishop Albert, of Prussia, published a charge, for the utility of the faithful navigating, to declare that such persons, merchants, or others, are placed under the protection of the Apostolic See; and, in the event of any of them suffering shipwreck, to call upon all who are near to bear them assistance, for God's sake, and for the sake of natural equity, and as they would wish to be themselves assisted in similar circumstances†. Even in times of war, pilgrims always found an efficient protection in being under the safeguard of the Holy See. which gave them free liberty to pass into hostile nations. We must hope, therefore, for the honour of Buccleugh, that no credit need be paid to the old harper, who sings of the Lady of Branksome, gathering a band to surprise Lord Cranstoun, as he went on pilgrimage to the chapel on the edge of St. Mary's Lake. The general obligation of respecting and succouring the stranger was an express precept of the Almighty to his chosen people; and it was a primeval tradition, which we find transmitted in the writings of many of the ancients. "Advenam non contristabis, neque affliges eum," is the command to the Jews‡, which is elsewhere repeated. "Advena sit inter vos, quasi indigena; et diligetis eum quasi vosmetipsos §." And the Athenian, in Plato, observes that

* Speculum Doctrinale, Lib. X. cap. 62.
† Voigt Geschichte Preussens III. 509.
‡ Exod. xxii. § Levit. xix.

offences against a stranger, or host, are visited with a more severe punishment from Heaven than those committed against one's own countryman, of which the reason is given, in the following most amiable words, which savour not the least of modern political economists—*ἔρημος γὰρ ὢν ὁ ξένος ἑταίρων τε καὶ ξυγγενῶν ἐλεεινότερος ἀνθρώποις καὶ θεοῖς**.

But to return to the pilgrim, and to view him seated beneath the hospitable roof. Those vast chimneys of the feudal castle, over which used often to be carved the hunting of St. Hubert; and in which a whole cart-load of wood used to be burnt every day in winter, used to hear strange variety of sweet and solemn words,—the song of the page, the counsels of the chaplain, the fable of the troubadour, the wanderings of the palmer and his woes. What were those pilgrims' tales of which the men in our age speak so scornfully? Were they related by men resembling, indeed, those wanderers, who used to visit Ithaca, of whom the swine-herd says, in Homer, that they are apt to lie, nor do they wish to tell truth; but they have always some idle stories about Ulysses, by means of which they hope to gain the favour of Penelope; and she loves them, and, weeping, asks them a thousand questions,† or, like these modern writers of travels, these narrators of scandal, and calumniators of Catholic nations, who, if they were honest, might say with the Sycophant, in Plautus—

> "Advenio ex Seleucia, Macedonia, Asia, atque Arabia,
> Quas ego neque oculis, neque pedibus unquam usurpavi meis ‡."

Ah, no! it was a different race of men from all these. In their journeys they were never to affect to bear news, however good and probable: "For," as St. Bonaventura said, "it was not the part of religious men to be news-bearers. The wise man had given them this precept, 'Avoid spreading reports, lest men should say you are the authors of them §.'" "Let him who wishes to hear good news," says a great writer of the time, "hear Christ speaking concerning the kingdom of God, the

* Plato de Legibus, Lib. V.
† Od. XIV. 125. ‡ Trinummus IV. 2.
§ S. Bonaventuræ Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 32.

future judgment, the heavenly Jerusalem, the felicity of the supernal citizens, the eternal rejoicing of the angelic choirs. Let him hear the prophets announcing the mysteries of Christ, and denouncing penalty against sinners; let him hear the apostles and evangelists relating the works and miracles of Christ; let him hear the doctors and other masters beautifully discoursing, expounding the happy way, and refuting errors*." Their journeys had no features to amuse the profligate, like those which belonged to that famous voyage to Brundusium, to the account of which the moderns are never tired listening. Travellers of the modern discipline would have had nothing to fear from landing upon Scythian Taurus, while the Temple of Diana stood, if the daughter of Agamemnon said true, that nothing but what was holy could ever be offered to the goddess. She would refuse to sacrifice any one of these men, saying—

οὐ καθαρὸν ὄντα· τὸν δ' ὅσιον δώσω φόνῳ †.

But the case would have been different in the middle ages; for the wandering scholar-boy, or the hoary palmer, would then have touched there to enrich the poet's mournful themes; and, therefore, the tales and discourse of those who had avoided that danger would be pure as the oracles of God. Their conversation also, though relative to foreign lands, had nothing to recommend it to the ears of that race of men most foolish, as the poet styles them, "who always vituperate things domestic, and look on all sides for distant objects, seeking vain things with idle hope‡." Their devout and solemn narrations suited not the children of vanity, nor those who had not their treasure with them; yet, though it was far from the gentle pilgrim to be a common laugher, still, as St. Bonaventura prescribes to the monk, in lodging with seculars on his journey, he was to be simple and humble, gentle without flattery, gay and affable without dissipation. It was his duty to moderate, on these occasions, the austerity of his manners; and for

* Thomas à Kempis, Hortulus Rosarum, cap. 12.
† Eurip. Iph. in Taur. 1029.
‡ Pindar, Pyth. Od. III.

the sake of charity and honest utility, to lay aside his gravity for a time*.

To judge merely from what occurs in our age, it would be impossible to understand or credit the interest which these pilgrims could inspire in every circle of listeners, whose attention to their tales they craved, for Christ's dear Church's sake. Of all descriptions of men at present, the traveller is, perhaps, the most insipid and disgustful; it seems as if he can only add the description of eating and drinking to the common-place narrations which are to be found in every library made up of scandal, reviling of holy things, calumny and pretended discoveries in the intrigues of government, and in the science of economy; and, besides this, if travellers were themselves of a higher order, men would be wanting in feeling to appreciate them: they would rather trust their pompous journals than their unpretending guest. The truth is, that religion is the source of all deep and powerful interest, so that where there is no religion, there can be no really intense intellectual interest experienced on any subject; for, let the understanding be ever so anxious to create one, the heart will still prove, on its demands, a cold and powerless organ. Hence, no one now has sufficient regard for a wanderer, as even to ask him, in the Homeric style—

τίς πόθεν εἶς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες †;

It is only, How stood the exchange, and what majority had ministers?—or, rather, ten to one it is, if possible, more prosaic still,—what money have you in your purse? But in ages of faith, when the hearts of men overflowed with the love of Christ, when in thought and in the deepest affection of their souls they ever stood on Calvary, and wept at the holy sepulchre, no sweeter moment was there than that in which they listened to the pilgrims describing the wonders of Jerusalem. To hear of Rome, too,—of sacred Rome,—and of Christ's vicar, who meekly sways the race of pre-elected men, full of reverence and amaze, desire in their minds grew with satiety. He it was who could tell of such things that held both keys to their heart, turning the wards, opening and shutting with a

* Id. cap. 31. † Od. XIV. 187.

skill so sweet that besides him into their inmost breast scarce any other could admittance find. As Martial says to a Roman, who was with him in the country, "Romam tu mihi sola facis;" so, he who had been in these sacred places was to them Rome and Jerusalem; and, like the Abbess of St. Hilda, they would style him holy Palmer; for, surely, they would add—

> "——— He must be sainted man,
> Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
> Where the Redeemer's tomb is found."

His very face was as a book, where men might read strange mournful, yet beatific things. The ideal of noble chivalry, with all its sufferings, seemed united there with that of the saintly life; and, in fact, the knightly pilgrim, like the Ulysses of the Odyssey, seems to be more in his genuine element when wandering in the midst of adventures and tempests, and in disguise, than when openly counselling and fighting on the plains of Asia. In Marmion, we have a fine description of the palmer, when Young Selby proposes that this stranger should be Lord Marmion's guide—

> "Here is a holy palmer come,
> From Salem first, and last from Rome:
> One that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
> And visited each holy shrine,
> In Araby and Palestine;
> On hills of Armenie hath been,
> Where rest of ark may yet be seen;
> By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
> Which parted at the prophet's rod;
> In Sinai's wilderness he saw
> The mount where Israel heard the law;
> He shows Saint James's cockle-shell;
> Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;
> And of that grot, where olives nod—
> Where, darling of each heart and eye,
> From all the youth of Sicily,
> Saint Rosalie retired to God.
> To stout Saint George, of Norwich merry;
> St. Thomas, too, of Canterbury;
> Cuthbert, of Durham; and Saint Bede,
> For his sins' pardon hath he prayed.
> He knows the passes of the north,
> And seeks for shrines beyond the Forth;

Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake:
This were a guide o'er moor or lake."

The English knight approves of the plan, and says, that he loves such holy wanderers, who can always cheer the way with some legendary strain; but young Selby, with an altered countenance, and finger laid on his lip, intimates that he is, perhaps, an over solemn and mysterious guide; and he is going on to describe his air and manner, when Marmion interrupts him, and says, that he will have no other guide but the palmer—

"So please you, gentle youth, to call
This palmer to the castle-hall.
The summon'd palmer came in place—
His sable cowl o'er-hung his face:
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;
The scallop-shell his cap did deck;
The crucifix around his neck
Was from Loretto brought;
His sandals were with travel tore—
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Show'd pilgrim from the holy land.
When, as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
Or look'd more high and keen;
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil,
His cheek was sunk, alas, the while!
Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face and sun-burnt hair,
She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know."

The palmer consents to guide the knight, but observes, that they must set out with morning-tide, adding—

"For I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St. Andrew's bound.
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good St. Rule his holy lay,

From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound."

The remembrance of the palmer might turn our thoughts to muse upon the Platonic notion of the pilot, where Socrates explains what renders him so conscious of the little value of his services to those whom he guides over the watery way; for, if that passage be compared with the description of the saintly wanderer, there will be found the same countenance and language in them both. The latter guides the knight, and seems not to imagine that he has performed any great office; he participates in his sufferings and success; and though full of charity, yet, whether he sees him cast down or elevated, he changes not his tone. Alike to him seem the prosperous and adverse course of his companion; he rejoices with him as though he rejoiced not; and enables him to see at length the day of return, and no sound of congratulation passes his lips. What is this but the same phenomena which Socrates observed in the pilot? "Witness the pilot," says he, "by whose skill our lives and properties are preserved from such great danger; and yet how modest he is and humble, and how far from making great boast, as if he could perform any thing wonderful; but if he preserves us safe coming from Ægina, he only demands two obols; and if he leads us back safe from Ægypt or Pontus, with our sons and wives and riches, he asks but two drachms; and the man who possesses this art, and who can perform these things, goes down to the shore, and walks by the seaside about his ship, in a lowly unassuming manner; for he perceives, I think, that it is very uncertain whether he has done a service or an injury to those whom he has saved from being drowned in the waves, knowing that he has put them on shore no better in body or soul than when he received them into his ship; he considers, then, that if any one, pressed with incurable maladies of body hath been saved by his means from perishing in the sea, the same is to be pitied, and has received no benefit from his hands; and if any one should have many incurable maladies in his soul, which is so much more precious than the body, it will be of no utility to him to preserve him from the sea; for he knows that it is not for the advantage of a wicked man to continue to live,

since he must needs live ill; therefore, there is no law to ordain that a pilot should be honoured, although he saves us*."

Many instances are on record of persons of profligate lives having been subdued and converted by a casual meeting with these holy wanderers, whose dignified and saintly presence would strike even brute violence with adoration and blank awe. Here, again, one's thoughts may return to what is told in pages of the old philosophy; for we read that, when Pythagoras descended from the sacred top of Carmel, where he had remained in solitary meditation, arriving at a bark, he uttered nothing but these words, Εἰς Αἴγυπτον ὁ ἀπόπλους; Are you bound for Egypt? And they answering in the affirmative, he embarked, and remained silent during the whole voyage, for two nights and three days eating nothing, and constantly composed and motionless, so that the sailors concluded it was a demon that passed from Syria into Egypt; and they were careful to utter no bad words among themselves, and to abstain from all impropriety till they had set him safe on shore†." The licentious songster, or the rude and worldly knight, the lover of wine and minstrelsy, bent perhaps upon some dark deed, would little suppose that the palmer's presence could interrupt their merriment, yet, when confronted with him, "how would one look from his majestic brow, seated as on the top of virtue's hill, discountenance them, despised, and put to rout all their array?"

It was not necessary to ascribe to the palmer that knowledge of more than could be learned by holy lore, of which young Selby spoke, in order to account for the solemn and half terrific scene at the hostel hearth—

> "Resting upon his pilgrim-staff,
> Right opposite the palmer stood:
> His thin dark visage, seen but half—
> Half hidden by his hood.
> Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
> Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
> Strove by a frown to quell;
> But not for that, though more than once
> Full met their stern encountering glance,
> The palmer's visage fell."

* Plato Gorgias. † Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 3.

His silence was a commentary which made the song of Fitz-Eustace fall sad on Marmion's ear; and when at length he spoke, though it was only these words, "The death of a dear friend,"

> "Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
> Ne'er changed in worst extremity;
> Marmion, whose soul could scantly brook,
> Even from his king, a haughty look;
> Whose accent of command controll'd
> In camps the boldest of the bold—
> Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now,
> Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow:
> For either in the tone,
> Or something in the palmer's look,
> So full upon his conscience strook,
> That answer he found none."

But it is time to return to our antique chronicles in search of instances that will illustrate the manner of a pilgrim's life from real history. An abstract of the narrative of Brother Nicole, the Carmelite, will, perhaps, supply what is yet wanting in our conception of this character in the middle ages, and with this testimony the present chapter shall conclude. "In the prologue, he states that he has accomplished this very holy and meritorious voyage, by the mercy of our sweet Jesus. I wish (he adds) to make known these noble and glorious places, to warn you to be mindful of our Lord Jesus, and that this book may be an amusement to many lords and ladies, who are curious to inquire respecting the land of promise. What I have seen, I will declare, to the best of my poor ability; and though this treatise be vile, and in need of much correction, nevertheless I pray all readers or hearers, who shall have made the same pilgrimage, if they should find any thing here contrary to our holy faith, that they will dispose it in good order through charity in honour of Jesus our Lord; for I protest that, neither in this present treatise, nor in any other which I have made, or may hereafter make, do I pretend to say or write any thing whatsoever which should be against faith or good manners; and I pray them, therefore, by charity, to correct my labours; for, whatever is presented, ought to be well arranged." Speaking of the holy sepulchre in Jerusalem, he says, "So often as

any one being faithful, or loyal in faith, enters within to contemplate the place, as many times does he behold, with the eyes of his mind, our Saviour Jesus there entombed." And, speaking of Golgotha, he exclaims, "O, great God, who hast delivered us from hell and from eternal death, is there a spot on the earth more glorious, more virtuous, more worthy of honour!" These are places which many Catholics kiss, shedding torrents of tears. The devout visitation of the holy places leads to holy meditation, to good resolutions of amendment, and to compunction for sin; and, in my judgment, there is no Catholic pilgrim who does not return more virtuous, better, more perfect than he ever was before. What Christian, on entering that holy land, is not dissolved in tears? Who is there that will not feel compunction, when merely from beholding that region, hearts are pierced, and laid bare with wondrous sighs? Let a man be ever so wicked, it is impossible but that he must be changed at the mere view of what is before him. Sainte et salutaire progression et très meritoire peregrination oultre la mer en Hierusalem: qui souffira a dicter ta value! Who is there that does not desire to amend his life, and to do penance for the time which he has lost, when he beholds before his eyes things so wondrous, and so calculated to incite to virtuous deeds? There, without doubt, is the grace of God diffused and imparted to all souls who do not place obstacles in its way by a malignant will. "Persons in all ages," he continues, "have travelled far to see places and men that deserved reverence, witness Pythagoras, and Plato, and the noble queen Saba, and now we know, that after all the labours of men under the sun, one thing, and one thing alone is necessary to know, Jesus Christ crucified, and risen again, and ascended into heaven; and therefore St. Paul declares that he desires to know and to write nothing but only Jesus, and to glory in nothing but in his cross, by whom we are saved and delivered; therefore no longer do any wise men glory in their wisdom, or in their riches, or power, or virtue, but all remember what St. John saith in his gospel, 'that eternal life is to know one only sovereign God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.' And although to attain this holy and salutary science, the gospel and the apostolic writings, and the daily preaching and proclaiming of the faith be widely sufficient, nevertheless to this

not a little may contribute the said pilgrimage and the beholding of the holy places through simple love for our sweet Jesus, who in dying, has destroyed our death. Therefore, for the present, I conclude with St. Jerome, 'that to have been in Jerusalem is not a very holy thing, but to have lived devoutly in Jerusalem, virtuously in holy conversation amidst a perverse generation, is to be praised, and renders the pilgrim worthy of renown.' After many vanities, alas, when the flower of my age had been lost, I began to consider the follies in which I had long slept; and the grace of Jesus awakening me to a sense of the worldly vanities by which I had been going to eternal perdition, I resolved from thenceforth to render testimony to the justice of the commandments of God and of my holy religion. I set out on my pilgrimage from the convent of Ponteau, in the diocese of Rouen. The reverend master Prior of the said convent, Geoffroy the Recluse, with a great company of the brethren of the convent, conducted me, during the space of three days, till we came to Chartres: en larmes et en pleurs fut nostre departement. There I waited for the setting out of a nobleman who is now a knight, the Seigneur de la Mouriniere, with whom I set out in Easter week, 1487, and rode through Savoy and Turin, till we reached Venice for the festival of St. Mark. We took up our lodging at the Savage Man in St. Mark's Place. Here we found many noblemen and clerks of France, some of whom joined our company, and among them was a Seigneur de Rochefort from Auvergne, and also there came to us a gracious and wise child, a native of Lyon, called Sir Henry de Encharmois. At Venice, they agreed with the patron of the galley, who was to supply all their expenses of journeying and food during the whole pilgrimage, both from and back to Venice, and each pilgrim was to pay him forty fresh ducats, half at Venice and the other half at Jaffa. He remarks, that at Cyprus one could procure twelve sheep for a ducat. They staid at Venice six weeks, in order to visit all the relics which are there and in Padua. At length setting out, they sailed to Corfu, Candia, Crete, Patmos and Rhodes. He found the inhabitants of Corfu 'Devote à Dieu, gent tres-humaine, et de grant honneur pleine.' We arrived at Rhodes about ten o'clock in the night on the eighth of July, and passed under the castle of St. Peter, which is an impregnable

fortress in the possession of the Knights of Rhodes. The dogs of this castle keep wonderful guard, for they go out at night, and if there should any Christians escape from the rocks, the dogs are sure to find them and to lead them to the castle; and if they find a Turk they kill him if they can, or they bark so loud that it is known within the castle *. It is wonderful how this castle can be preserved to Christendom, for it seems only six miles from Turkey, which is separated only by a narrow arm of the sea. The hospital of the church of Rhodes is a wonderful place, built like a monastery, and in the great hall there are thirty-nine beds for sick people of all nations and degrees, if they only believe in Jesus Christ; and in the middle is a beautiful chapel where masses are sung every day; and the poor sick people are all served on silver by the seigneurs of Rhodes moult curieusement, and besides this, there are twenty-four chambers surrounding the cloister to lodge the pilgrims, who are received most fraternally, and they are invited most affectionately by the hospitaler who refreshes them, and serves them very joyously.

"On the Friday we had a fair wind in the stern, so that at six o'clock in the evening appeared the holy land. Then you might have seen and heard the devout hearts; then were groans and tears, and chants of devotion. We had to remain at Jaffa thirteen days to wait for the father guardian, and so we tarried in good patience, praising our Redeemer. At length we set forth; on approaching Rama, we were obliged to alight from our asses, and each pilgrim had to carry his burden with great pain, on account of the dreadful heat and of the dust, which was so thick that one could not see the other. The Moors would not suffer us to enter Rama mounted, so we entered it thus on foot, and there we were lodged in the hospital founded by the money of Philip of Burgundy. May God absolve the noble duke! From Jaffa to Rama we were escorted by Mahometans, to protect us from the other Moors who kept throwing stones at us every step we made. Sometimes they have killed pilgrims: such was our peril. On the morning of Sunday, the fifth of August, mass was said at four o'clock by one of the monks; and then at the offertory, the Father

guardian instructed us how we were to behave on our journey towards the people of the country, speaking to us from the altar in Latin, Italian and German. 'Dear and well-beloved brethren in Jesus Christ, take heed to the following advice, that you may not lose the fruits of this holy journey. First, if any of you should have incurred sentence of excommunication, the father guardian of this place, by the power of the holy father, can absolve you therefrom, to whom you must apply, and take consolation in this rejoicing which our Lord has granted to you, in beholding with your eyes the places on which he has trod in accomplishing the salvation of all men by his sacred blood. Secondly, you must believe firmly the articles of faith, for otherwise you will lose the merit and fruit of the pilgrimage. Thirdly, you must have great confidence as to your conscience, that you will have remission; and you must have contrition and a true intention of never again returning to sin. Fourthly, you must consider for what end you are come, and it must be for devotion and contemplation to see the holy places, weeping after Jesus Christ. Fifthly, I say to all, take heed, that you walk honestly and that you commit no evil.' You must make no more mention of wine, unless you can carry some from the ship; there is no cellar here where you can buy any." We set out from Rama on foot as we entered it, and under great heat. On coming to the place where our asses were waiting, each pilgrim claimed his own; so it was four o'clock in the afternoon before we began our march. We travelled till midnight. From Rama to Jerusalem is thirty Italian miles. On the fall of night, we entered the mountains which were very rude and hard for me, because I was obliged to leave my ass. 'Oncques ne fus plus lasse.' It is the greatest danger for pilgrims when they are left too far in the rear, for the people would desire nothing more than to destroy us one by one. At midnight we stopped to lodge under the shelter of an olive grove near a fountain, which was very refreshing to our thirst. Here we made our collation, and then under these olive trees the knights slept for three hours. An hour before day we mounted our asses, and rode till we saw the town of Arimathea. It was nothing but up and down hill, and it was laughable to look at our train one after the other. On reaching the summit whence we had the first view of Jerusalem, every

one kissed the earth and raised his eyes to heaven. So we all entered the city, and the brethren of Mount Sion led all the monks to their convent where we had refection. The others were lodged in the vast hospital of Saint John, and there sufficient victuals were given them. God knew how weary they all were. The next morning all the pilgrims were summoned to Mount Sion to hear mass and the sermon. Regulars and seculars each by devotion celebrated with great compunction. After the sermon there was a procession to Mount Sion. Then the guardian invited all the pilgrims to dinner, and every one was seated, charitably and honourably served with abundance, and then we all went in very noble guise to the church to return thanks. After vespers, we spent the time in contemplating the holy places." It appears that they proceeded to visit each of the holy places in solemn procession, each carrying a lighted taper, and a sermon was pronounced at each station. Every year the good duke Philippe, of Burgundy, used to give 1000 ducats in compassion and devotion for the support of the true Christians there serving God. That night after the procession, they remained in the holy sepulchre; the first part of the night was spent in confession, and after midnight the masses were said in order, some on the holy sepulchre, others in it, and others on Mount Calvary. Lastly, the Bishop of Cambray sung high mass with great solemnity, and many received the holy communion, and then each went about according to his devotion, and at eight o'clock in the morning the gates were opened, and the pilgrims returned to the hospital or to their brethren. "On the Assumption of our Lady, we went at midnight to chant at the holy sepulchre, in the crypt of the church at Josaphat; and then returned to high mass on Mount Sion, where she died. 'Tout ce jour se passa en contemplation.' On going to visit the church of St. George near Rama, there were about sixty pilgrims, and the greatest part of them Englishmen. Horrible are the exactions and insolences of the Moors. One pilgrim was moved to strike a Turk, for which he was near forfeiting his hand. 'Pourtant Pélerins soyez tous enclins à tout endurer toutes les injures, griefs ou forfaictures au nom de Jesus, car il endura.' The poor Franciscan friars at Jerusalem live most virtuous and holy lives amidst these Sarassins and heretics."

The details on his return may be given in few words. For once he indulges in a poetic tale. "From the top of Mount Sinai," says he, "you behold a region stretching to the Red Sea, and in this plain there is a monastery of holy men, but no one can discern the way to it. You hear the bells toll: and some, it is said, have reached it, but none have ever returned. The monks of St. Catharine have gone in search of it, and have heard the bells, but have never succeeded." During this passage of the deserts of Mount Sinai, they seem to have carried a portable altar, so that mass used to be said even amidst those vast solitudes. "On returning, while at sea, on the night of the 12th of September, trespassed a noble knight, who had received the order of knighthood at Jerusalem. He was was doctor in utroque, and named Master Symon, a gracious man and wise. God pardon him. And on the 16th inst. at six o'clock in the morning, trespassed a seigneur of the Church, subdeacon of Angers, named Messire Gilles, a native of Brittany, a man of great virtue, and full of good manners. Jesus be propitious to him and to us all!" At length, after a long and stormy passage from Alexandria, they arrived at Modoust, a city on the coast of Achaia; and now their long desire of hearing mass was gratified. Entrez en la cite on alla à la messe tres fort desiree a cuyr, car de long temps on ny avoit este.

Such is the style of a pilgrim's narrative; such were the sufferings and woes he had to endure: and yet a far deeper source of mourning to him was found in the reflections of philosophy, which were excited by what he had seen in journeying to the Holy Land. "O subject worthy of tears and bitter sighs! (exclaims Nicole) that these beautiful countries of the East, once so carefully cultivated by the holy apostles, should be now subverted and lost! Ah! who can think without groans of Asia and Africa, which had such noble churches, which heard a St. Augustin, a Chrysostom, a Cyprian, an Athanasius, a Cyrill, a St. John Damascene, a Gregory Nicene, a Gregory Nazianzen, a Basil of Cæsarea, and so many other great bishops? Helas Lucifer trebuscha du ciel a mis son siege present en orient. En orient sont les tenebres de peche qui ont tout aveugle et n'y voit on que l'ymaige de mort." They have broken unity, they have been rebellious to the see of Peter, to whom Jesus said,

"Thou art called a rock; and on this rock will I build my Church:" and therefore, without doubt, those who are disobedient to this mother and mistress of the faith, fall into the guilt of heresy. St. Ambrose in his time said, he wished to follow the Roman Church in all things; so said St. Jerome at the time of the Arian heresy; so said St. Irenæus in the apostolic age; so say all good Christians: for where the body is, there will be the eagles: where is the chief, there will be the members. But the inhabitants of the East have left the ark, and therefore is their glory perished: "quiconques mangera laignel hors de l'Eglise Sainct Pierre necessairement est prophane."

These wise pilgrims of the middle age, who had found in the East, Mahometans, Greek schismatics, Syrians, Jacobites, Nestorians, Abbasins, and Eutychians, had meditated on the difficulty which is now so often adduced, founded on the variety of religions, and the comparative smallness of the number who hold the true faith: but the result of their observations only led to reflections which confirmed their faith. This poor brother Nicole, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, pursued the same argument from analogy which has been so well developed by later philosophers; and he shows that the same difficulty presents itself in the natural world, with respect to things noble and base, where the phenomena of external nature would lead to the same reflection on the wide existence of evil, as a fact which did not admit of being denied. Happiness, wisdom, and virtue, are not given to all men. Every kind of excellence is comparatively rare and precious, and we must be prepared, therefore, for finding that such is the case respecting that highest of all excellences, which consists in the splendour and eternal felicity of souls that attain to final beatification and glory. And, after all, he argues that we should be slow either to excuse or to condemn. We cannot presume either upon the innocence or the guilt of erring men. Negligence of inquiry and the evidences of our faith are great; and therefore, the ignorance of many must needs be highly sinful: and the apostle says, that the unknowing shall be unknown. God will never desert those who sincerely turn their hearts to him. And if any seducer, under the habit or name of a Catholic doctor, should preach to any simple creature any error,

and the simple ignorant creature should believe it to be Catholic truth, in turning himself to God totally, he will be preserved, and his heart shall not be suffered to incline to folly: for David says that God will guard those who love him. But the understanding of men is created for the embracing of holy and salutary truth, and negligence here is no doubt worthy of damnation; and as every thing tends easily to its natural end, so our natural intellectual virtue is more near to find God than it is to find his contrary. For God is always ready to aid those who seek him with a good and honest heart; and thus we find that Cornelius, though a Pagan, yet living religiously and fearing God, St. Peter was sent to convert him and all his family. " Il est a croire totalement que jamais Dieu ne laissa ceux qui veullent adherer a luy diligentement." And therefore, all error that receives damnation, springs from malice. " L'homme n'est pas moins tenu a Dieu des operations de l'entendement que des operations de sa volonte ou affections:" And there are laws to regulate his will and affections, and therefore we may be sure that there are laws to fix limits to his understanding, to determine what he should believe, and what he should not believe: and therefore, ignorance is damnable, for they ought to believe what they do not: and they ought curiously to inquire what are these laws. Whereas the multitude run with all their strength to sin and death as their end; and it is not strange, therefore, that they should find it. And we know that the justice as well as the mercy of God will be the subject of eternal admiration and joy to the just in heaven. And the first and great cause of all these errors is negligence of inquiry, and the second is aversion to believe what ought to be believed of God, and a hatred for the things that would enlighten and convert the soul; and if they will not heed either holy words or miracles, it is not strange that they remain in error; and another cause is the folly and presumption of men in supposing that their natural understanding is able to comprehend the mysteries of faith, and another cause is the abuse of the Scriptures, and another cause is a sensual life, like that of the Epicureans *.

These are the sorrowful and profound reflections, sug-

* F. 40—44.

gested to the traveller of the middle ages, by what was seen on the journey to the Holy Land. The reader will now pass on with a still more full conviction, that the pilgrim was indeed a mourner.

But there is another side, from which we must contemplate the mourning of men in ages of faith, which will place us in the presence of scenes of great sublimity, yet not without the charm of a profound tenderness. We are come where I have said we should see the departure of exiles to their country, amidst the mourning of friends who remain behind. The approach must not intimidate us, though we should be at first confronted with a tribe like that which Dante beheld, that came along the hollow vale, in silence weeping. Let us imagine that we behold some reverend stranger, with finger lifted, placed against his lips. This will suffice to warn us, that we may enter as the spot requires—silent and devout.

CHAPTER VI.

"If I were a maker of books," says Montaigne, "I would compose a register of different deaths, with a commentary: for whoever would teach men how to die, would teach them how to live." It is not merely devotion that is interested in this theme; history itself must acknowledge its importance: for, as the same philosopher observes, "death is the most remarkable action of human life. It is the master-day—the day that judges all the others." The path which we are pursuing, leads us necessarily within view of death, towards which we must turn our eyes. For though the nature of death is changed since the accomplishment of man's redemption, it is still the punishment which God has left to be inflicted upon sin; and whether considered in relation to nature or to grace, it is an event which involves mourning of one sort or other, according to the spirit with which it is received, or the previous prepar-

ation which may have been made against it. Men of the modern school, indeed, seem practically to consider this whole subject of death as one, independent of a scientific observation of the progress of the physical malady, beneath the attention of philosophers. Viewing it merely as the dissolution of organs, the decomposition of a worn-out machine, which is incapable any longer of being subservient to animal existence, as an extinction of the powers of life, either through the nervous system constituting death by syncope, or through the circulation in the arteries of a different kind of blood, causing death by asphyxia,—in other words, examining it merely with the eyes of a physician, it is not strange that they should be insensible to the high moral grandeur which so often distinguishes the closing scene of mortal life, or that they should be surprised and offended at the importance which religion ascribes to this last act in the combat of her children. Far differently, it may be remarked, did the monarch of sublimest song estimate the dignity of the human struggle, when, in the concluding scene of the Iliad, he represents the two heroes of Greece and Troy at length confronted with each other; when all mortal beholders are dissolved in tears and horror, and celestial powers prepare to join in the conflict; when even the King of gods looks down from his high throne of heaven, to sympathize in the dangers of great unhappy men, to pity their dreadful labours, and to raise at last that awful balance, which is to determine their irrevocable doom *.

I have said that the nature of death is changed since Christ dried up the fountain of tears by his resurrection: and this is a fact to which the history of the ages of faith bears such remarkable testimony, that if there were no other object in consulting it but merely to examine that testimony, there would be no hazard in affirming that the result would be more than sufficient to compensate for any labour that the inquiry might have occasioned; fully justifying the opinion, that the study of no other period of the history of man can present so rich and solemn a spectacle for the instruction and correction of the human race. When we first set out upon this track, I observed, that men could not with any justice accuse

* Il. XXII. 168.

religion, or the history of the ages of faith, of leading them through dark and gloomy ways, which they might have avoided with other guides: and here I must repeat that remark; for it is not religion, but nature, which obliges all men, sooner or later, to be familiarised with the image of death. Nature takes care that even in youth they should be taught to feel its reality: and oh! if the heart be left to nature, how bitter, how terrible, is that stern lesson! Infinite is the youthful mourning consequent upon the first experience of the changeableness of earthly things, which, to the inexperienced mind, comes so necessarily, so unavoidably, that changeableness of things so closely and invariably interwoven with individual existence. A first announcement of death is a rent which is never forgotten, but which remains afflicting the soul like a night spectre, unless faith should change it into a joyful desire of that day, which will summon us to a securer world, and to a more consoling knowledge*. "Here," as a great French writer observes, "there is no need of consulting history. The Muse of sorrow is of every age. Who is ignorant of the funeral chant? Who has not followed to the grave some tender, beloved relation, and felt the secret fall of that one pearly drop, which, from the manly eye, more than a flood of tears, bears witness to the affection with which a son can love his mother?"

The ancients, notwithstanding their superstitious language, seemed to have had a passion for dwelling on the thought of death, and of its necessity. Pindar makes it enter into the definition of man: for, speaking of the human race, he says, "Those to whom death is inevitable." The heroic world, indeed, had its boastful eloquence to reconcile men to this king of terrors. What madness to repine at death! What complaint is this?

ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόντα, πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἶσᾳ,
ἀψ ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ἐξαναλῦσαι†;"

And yet this mortality, this fate, this death, how must they have been, to the feelings of nature, replete with images of terror, fearful, revolting, horrible! To these unhappy men, with nothing to assist their frailty, death could not have appeared more amiable than it did to

* Novalis Schriften, I. 24. † Il. XVI. 441.

Adam, when he beheld, with looks of dismay, its first victim.—

> " But have I now seen death? Is this the way
> I must return to native dust? O sight
> Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,
> Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!"

Milton makes it an object of horror to the angel:

> " ———— Death thou hast seen
> In his first shape on man: but many shapes
> Of death, and many are the ways that lead
> To his grim cave, all dismal."

Since the Son of God endured it on the cross, such language would not only be unworthy of an angel's tongue, but, without recurring to what is related of Spartan fortitude, it would argue ignorance and pusillanimity in a boy. The author of the Martyrs describes the image of death as it appeared after the great fulfilment of primeval prophecy. " One hand of the skeleton, (he says) holds a scythe like a mower; with the other it attempts to hide the only wound that it has ever received, that which Christ inflicted upon it, when he conquered on the top of Golgotha *." Cruel enemy! well may it seek to hide that wound which has destroyed its sting irremediably. Unlike the formidable conqueror which it once hoped to be, only the weak and wicked can it affright or injure. We are so constituted, indeed, that this crisis naturally impresses every one with a feeling of awe. The pinched and pallid features, the cold, clammy skin, the heaving, laborious, rattling respiration, and the irresistible force of that disease which no earthly remedies can overcome, speak of something appalling, and suggest the idea of an Almighty Power manifesting displeasure and inflicting punishment. Yet this is not the language which they speak to the Christian observer. He sees these formidable symptoms only as the means or the consequences of good. In the midst of all this apparent confusion, he can see much that he can understand, indicating the counsel and foresight of a wise and good Creator, by

* Lib. VIII.

whom the progress and elevation of the human species is an object of constant care. Death, though something foreign from the original order of the natural world, has been converted into an agent of mercy: it has become homogeneous with the laws and constitution of a pure and innocent creation: it forms part of that great scheme, of which every discoverable purpose is marked with beneficence as well as wisdom. Death is still endured by the saints; for, as St. Augustin observes, there could be no faith, if immortality of the body were to be the immediate consequence of the sacrament of regeneration; but, by the wondrous grace of our Saviour, the penalty of sin is changed, so as to serve justice. Formerly it was said, "You shall die if you transgress;" but now it is said, "Die rather than transgress." Thus, by the ineffable mercy of God, the punishment of vice becomes the armour of virtue, and the just gain merit, where the sinner found his doom *. Those penmen whom the Holy Spirit moved, in many a passage of their sacred book, predict or attest this admirable manifestation of our Creator's love. They speak of death as being henceforth amiable in the eyes of men, sanctified in the estimation of angels, precious in the sight of God. "Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus." Their death is precious: it is their nativity: the entrance to rest, the exit to glory. And who can justly estimate the wondrous change which is here made manifest? Consider what poor consolation for the human heart was supplied in those eloquent treatises by ancient philosophers, which they entitled "De Contemnenda Morte," in which it is so gravely discussed whether death be an evil. And if they are so unsatisfactory when read in health, notwithstanding all the brilliancy and magic of their style, what must they have been if proposed to the dying, with the hope of dissipating the terrors of their departure? But since the Orient from on high hath visited the race of men, there is no longer occasion for engaging in such discussions, or for endeavouring to inspire contempt for that which is no longer an object of terror. During the ages of faith, the Catholic vision, the Catholic idea, that which shed a lustre over the whole course of human life, which consoled and exalted the mind in every vicissitude,

* De Civit. Dei, Lib. XIII. 4.

and in every stage of the mortal course, that which determined the direction of all the intellectual faculties, and the whole shape of men's conceptions, that which alone gave a charm to prosperity and a value to existence, that vision had nothing to fear from the prospect of death. Unlike every thing that is subjected to human perception, it ended not there, but led on the soul to that passage, and enabled it to depart full of joy and confidence: while to the human philosopher, without the supernatural light and consolations of faith, every thing dear to his imagination, every thing interwoven with his mental habits, and with the very constitution of his heart, seems to end for ever, when he is clad in clay. "In death," says Durandus, "we pass from one Church to another, from the militant to the triumphant Church*." "For the just," says another holy writer, "natural death, is only a passage from God to God, from one Paradise to another Paradise†." By the passion of our Saviour Christ, death was sanctified, death was become a holy and a blessed thing, a means of imitating Jesus, and of entering upon eternal life. St. Basil says, "The nature of sadness is changed since the cross of Christ. At first the death of the saints was honoured with lamentation and tears, but now, we rejoice at the death of the saints, for we believe it to be the passage to a better life."

Death, in the middle ages, had quite a different character from that in which it appears to Nature's eye. Who has not made this remark on beholding those ancient paintings which represent dying men, like those of Le Sueur exhibiting the death of St. Bruno? What a placid smile on the countenance of the returning exile! With what peaceful reverence and wonder do the brethren stand or kneel round him! See that humble monk, who stands at a distance with clasped hands, on whose face one may read unutterable thoughts of love, so calmly regarding him as his spirit passes, while another still holds up the crucifix to his fading eye, though, by his attitude, turning round to those behind him, he seems to ask for assent to his own opinion, that he is already gone. "The souls of the just are in the hand of God,

* Durandi Rationale, Lib. IV. cap. 6.

† L. P. Judde, Œuvres Spirituelles, Tom. II. 263.

and the torment of death shall not touch them." Here are no bitter lamentations, or wringing of hands, or tearing of the hair.

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair."

St. Ambrose wrote a Treatise "On the Advantages of Death," in which he shows the happiness of dying, because death has nothing terrible in itself, and is a deliverance from snares and sin. "With faith to enlighten you," say the philosophers of the middle age, "why fear death, which to you should appear only as a higher revelation of life? How many things do men voluntarily undertake, which are more painful and distressing than the act of death? Compare it with the setting out on a long and toilsome journey, alone, without friends, leaving all who are dear and familiar to you, going among strangers, where there will be no one to welcome you; and all this merely, perhaps, to satisfy vanity, and with the hope of gain! What sleepless nights, what fatiguing days, what profane and disgusting associates by the way, what interminable troubles and interruptions, perhaps amidst wars and civil tumults and persecutions of the Church. Compare death to this. You are at home, in the bosom of relations and friends, with those you love around you; no cares to trouble you, no solicitude; you are going a journey of necessity, a journey sanctified by the Saviour, and by the passage of all God's holy saints; a journey you must accomplish if you would be with that which you seek, if you would follow where all that is amiable and good is fled: whither all your hopes are gone before: where, perhaps, you will have father, mother, sisters, brethren, and saints, to welcome you: where you will find the friends of your childhood and youth, and where all your troubles will be at an end.—"Hæc peregrinatio mediocris vobis videri potest?" Why linger, why turn back, why shrink or fear to depart from earth's shadows, which change and pass so quickly? How different the length of the two ways! How tedious, and difficult, and painful the one! how short, and easy, and calm the other! You fall asleep,—and when you awake, perhaps you find yourself in your country. You

closed your eyes upon a flickering taper, and you may open them to behold Heaven's light which will for ever shine. The last sounds you heard were the prayers of some priest, feeble and worn down with his labours in this valley of tears, perhaps the mourning of nature struggling with faith, the longings of desire, the sighs of the dove, and now you hear joyful hallelujahs and the music of exulting angels. "Let us reflect from time to time," says St. Cyprian, "that we have renounced the world, and that we live here below as guests and strangers. What man, obliged to dwell in a foreign land, would not strain every nerve to return to his native country? What traveller journeying homeward, does not pray to heaven for a favourable wind, that he may the sooner embrace his dear parents? Our country is Heaven. We have for fathers first, the patriarchs. Why do we not hasten, why do we not run to behold our country and to salute our parents? A vast number of friends are waiting for us, a crowd of relations, of brethren and children, sure of their own salvation and only anxious for ours, desire nothing but to behold us united to them for ever. What joy for us to meet them again and to embrace them! What a pleasure to die without fear! What profound and perpetual felicity to live in eternity!" "All my hope is in death. I die of regret that I cannot die," says St. Theresa in her celebrated glose after communion, and the effusion of beatific light seen but in a vision, made the poet of the ages of faith exclaim,

> "Whoso laments that we must doff this garb
> Of frail mortality, thenceforth to live
> Immortally above; he hath not seen
> The sweet refreshing of that heavenly shower *."

But methinks I hear some one reply, to die young is surely a calamity to be deplored even by the most spiritual? Indeed, what new doctrine is this to be delivered by men professing wisdom? Bacchus was for deciding against Æschylus merely because in one verse he represented death as the greatest of evils †; and the fable of Silenus, alluded to by Cicero, conveys the deepest conviction of the ancient world, who, when he was taken by

* Dante's Parad. XIV. † Aristoph. Ranæ, 1393.

Midas, is said to have given for his ransom this lesson, "that it was the best thing for man not to be born, and that the next best was to die as soon as possible *;" the latter part of which sentence must remind every one of what is read in the sacred scriptures, that Enoch pleased God, and appeared no more, because God took him away †. "It was because he pleased God," says St. Cyprian, "that he was transported far from the contagion of the world."

"In the ages of faith, he who was to be *ὠκυμορώτατος ἄλλων*," as Thetis says of her son ‡, "would not have been regarded as unhappy." In fable, indeed, a mighty king is made to exclaim, "haa mort villaine! comment as tu este si hardie dassailir un tel homme comme estoit mon nepueu qui de bonte passoit tout le monde." Yet not Orcus, as Euripides says, but Heaven seemed to have greater glory when the youthful died §. As far as relates to the thought of an untimely death, faith and reason clear, had undeceived men. Whether their flesh parted shrivelled from them, or whether they died when the cheek was first clothed in down, or before the coral and the pap were left, the difference was to eternity compared, "a briefer space, than is the twinkling of an eye to the heaven's slowest orb." But death in years of boyish innocence, even to nature's eye, was not a hideous or a fearful spectacle. What tender and even lovely scenes were those in which occurred the death of a St. Stanislas, or a St. Louis Gonzaga. "I die without reluctance, I die full of joy, though the gifts of youth are mine to make life grateful to me." There was here, enough to make men exclaim, "Death, death; O amiable lovely death."

The heroic spirit of the scholastic romantic ages would not disdain to urge the motive which Achilles adduces to reconcile the youthful son of Priam to meet death.

Ἀλλὰ φίλος, θάνε καὶ σύ· τίη ὀλοφύρεαι οὕτως;
Κάθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος, ὅπερ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων.
Οὐχ ὁράᾳς, οἷος κάγὼ καλός τε μέγας τε;
Πατρὸς δ' εἰμ' ἀγαθοῖο, θεὰ δέ με γείνατο μήτηρ·
Ἀλλ' ἐπί τοι καὶ ἐμοὶ θάνατος καὶ Μοῖρα κραταιή ||.

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* Tuscul. I. 45. † Gen. v. 24. ‡ Il. I. 505.
§ Alcestis. || Il. XXI. 106.

Why do you repine at death? Are not these dead in the flower of youth and beauty, cut off from beloved friends and brothers, from sweet and holy studies, from that golden world which is made joyful by piety and innocence, and yet did they not die with resignation and even with delight? Die then like them, and exult to follow such bright examples. For the generality of men to die young, was known to be, on every account, an excellent lot. "Priam," as Callimachus remarks, "wept much oftener than Troïlus;" and in relation to spiritual good, Henry Suso observes, "that for the most part, with age sins are increased, and that you will find far more who become worse than who become better. Our blessed Saviour chose not to protract his life beyond the flower, and it was an Antipope who prolonged his usurpation beyond the years of Peter *." Men never leave the world with such becoming grace as when young; as when they seem to make death proud with pure and princely beauty. To die young seems like a genuine heroic act. "Love is sweetest in death: for one who loves, death is a mystery of sweet mysteries; it is a bridal night," to use the expression of Novalis †. If it be the most beautiful art and gift, as the Greek poet says:

εὐκλεῶς λιπεῖν βίον ‡.

then assuredly we should die young. In the death of youth there is nothing hideous or revolting, but only a most sweet solemn form of loveliness. In allusion to her death, Beatrice speaks thus to Dante:—

——————— "never didst thou spy
In art or nature, aught so passing sweet
As were the limbs that in their beauteous frame,
Enclos'd me, and are scatter'd now in dust."

The death of youth, the striking down of these fair flowers, was often made the occasion of eternal good to men, by converting their hearts to a love of God. Adverting to this, Beatrice continued to admonish Dante:

* Called by some Benedict XIII.
† Schriften, II. 312. ‡ Eurip. Heraclid. 534.

> "If sweetest thing thus fail'd thee with my death,
> What, afterwards, of mortal, should thy wish
> Have tempted? When thou first hadst felt the dart
> Of perishable things, in my departing
> For better realms, thy wing thou should'st have prun'd
> To follow me; and never stoop'd again
> To bide a second blow *."

In the middle ages, men were conversant with what Frederick Schlegel terms "the beautiful side of death." They marked that full and perfect consciousness, that peculiar clearness and almost foresight which so frequently attend the soul in her last moments previous to departure, to which Shakspeare alludes in these lines:

> "O, but they say, the tongues of dying men
> Enforce attention, like deep harmony."

They marked that courage with which she prepares to enter upon a new sphere, upon regions that never saw man that could after measure back his course †, that higher clearness in hope and faith, nay, even that expression of countenance which indicates a change to bliss, when they beheld with astonishment, a sweet melancholy smile steal over the face, like that which comes upon a sleeping child ‡. The emblematical figure which is placed at the end of the sentence which this great Catholic philosopher was prevented from finishing by death, is quite in accordance with this view, and furnishes a striking contrast to the designs of that detested triumph which employed the pencil of the Basle Painter. It represents a beautiful figure with extended wings, and holding with outstretched arms, the rings and links of a broken chain. It flies upwards through the serene air, as if it had just escaped, and the globe of this earth is seen below, half enveloped in clouds, while an eye at the summit of the picture indicates the seat of God, towards which it is ascending. St. Charles Borromeo ordered a painter to substitute the golden key of Paradise for the skeleton and scythe by which an artist had represented death. In the chronicles of the middle ages, we read of many who made a

* Parad. XXXI. † Dant. Purg. I.
‡ Philosophie der Sprache, 112.

swan-like end, fading in music, who died, as the poet says, "like the dolphin whom each pang imbues

> "With a new colour as it gasps away,
> The last still loveliest, 'till 'tis gone."

So Shakspeare says of one who had passed from this world, "nothing in his life became him like the leaving it: he died as one that had been studied in his death."

"Speaking accurately and strictly," says Frederic Schlegel, "according to this Christian view of life, there is no such thing as death, but only a change of life and its passing form. There is no death in nature, that is to say, death is not essential and original, but it has been introduced into the creation subsequently and by accident. For men, the immortality of the soul, and the idea of this immortality form not so much an article of faith and of the highest hope, as a real phenomenon of nature, an unquestionable matter of fact, which is attested by all history *." "To die," says Novalis, "is a genuine philosophic act †." He alludes probably to that saying of the Pythagoreans, "that in three modes man could render himself better, by converse with the gods, by doing good to others, and by dying, which was the total separation of the soul from the body ‡." But whatever may be thought of this speculation, we may appropriate to ourselves the sentence, and say, in reference to death in the middle ages, that "to die was a genuine religious act;" an act converted by the spirit of resignation and of love for Christ from a natural necessity, to be the voluntary offering of a devout and obedient heart. It must, however, be carefully remarked, that this "beautiful side of death" is connected essentially with the Catholic form of life. It is the manners and customs of the impious city which make sickness and death horrible. To the quiet retirement and contemplation of nature, to the charity and spirit of obedience to God in which the Catholic was accustomed to pass his days, the silence of the sick room was no contrast; he had learned to live alone without visits, without cares, without political debates, and without flattery; but from a perpetual tumult of pleasures or business, with some constant external excitement, the

* Philosophie der Sprache, 269.
† Schriften II. 142.
‡ Anonym. de Vita Pythagoræ.

transition to it was undoubtedly something as dismal to the imagination as the idea of death itself to the natural eye. And this leads me to notice the objection which some may advance, who, though willing to admit that the act of death may have been stript of terror, cannot conceive how the passage to it through a long sickness could ever have been any thing but a fearful and unmixed calamity. Unquestionably it belongs not to the principles of the true philosophy to imitate that stoical indifference which affected to deny that the sufferings of the body were an evil, or to adopt, as St. Augustin says, "the proud error of those who attribute to the strength of the human will that constancy which is derived from the Divine assistance." "There are but few," says that holy doctor, "who are not punished in this life but only after it. The evils of diseases in the body are so numerous, that they cannot be all described even in the books of the physicians. Who does not shudder at the bare recital of them? Life itself begins with weeping, for Zoroaster alone is said to have laughed when he was born, which monstrous act portended no good to this inventer of magical arts, who found them of no avail even to preserve the vain happiness of the present life from the power of his enemies, since he was conquered by Ninus, king of the Assyrians. 'Grave jugum super filios Adam a die exitus de ventre matris eorum, usque in diem sepulturæ in matrem omnium.' And yet such is the mercy of God towards the vessels of mercy, that even from this yoke of the present life, the grace of our Saviour Christ, in a great measure delivers them *," though not wholly, lest religion should only be loved for the sake of temporal advantages. What, let us ask, was sickness to the members of the city of God during these supernatural ages? Like every other condition to which mortal life was subject, it had experienced the mysterious and gladdening influence of the glorious light of faith. Sickness now disproved the definition of a happy man, as given by Metrodorus; for like death, it was become amiable, sanctified, and precious; it belonged to the condition not of wretched, but of blessed mourners; it was a holy condition full of instruction, full of peace; it was solitude, meditation, repose; it was the life of blessed

* De Civitate Dei, Lib. XXI. 14. XXII. 22.

eremites and of men perfect. Hear how a writer of the middle ages speaks to the sick. "We are commanded to weep with those who weep, and Jesus himself wept. Disobedience is inhumanity. I will weep therefore lest I should be disobedient and inhuman, and not an imitator of my Jesus. You are oppressed with sickness, my sweet son; you are perhaps about to go the way of all flesh. But whither? to life. By what way? You cannot err: the way is Christ. You cannot be deceived: Christ is truth. You cannot but live; Christ is life. But, beloved, confession and penance are necessary that you may be in perfect charity. The love of your neighbour worketh no evil. What shall I say of the love of God? These are the two wings with which you must fly to heaven. Love God and God will love you. Love God and you will love whatever he loves, whatever he sends you. Do you suffer from a cough, from inflammation, from weakness of stomach, from any of the innumerable diseases to which our frame is subject? These are the gifts of God. These are his chastisements for your good; condemn them not, but revere and love Him who, as a Father, corrects you not in anger but in mercy. O with what a joyful heart ought you to hail the Divine visitation, the spiritual remedy, the antidote to the sting of death! Lift up your heart to God and say, "Tu es spes mea, Deus meus: diffido de meis meritis, sed confido de miserationibus tuis: et plus confido de tuis miserationibus, quam diffidam de malis actibus meis. In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum *." St. Chrysostom writes as follows to Olympias and says, "Do not suppose that you lead an idle, useless life for your salvation, when sickness confines you at home attached to your bed. What you support is above what they suffer who are delivered to the executioners. 'In vestra patientia possidebitis animas vestras.' He does not say," adds St. Augustine, "your villas, your honours, your luxuries, your comforts, your health, but your souls; and if the soul can suffer, as is proved by experience, so many things for the sake of that by which it may perish, what ought it not to suffer that it may never perish? What ought it not to suffer, in order, by the tranquil endurance of pain and death, by a patient passion, to obtain the inestimable good of a happy

* De Visitatione Infirmorum, Lib. incerti auctoris.

immortality * ?" "Jam ægritudinem laudare, unam rem maxime detestabilem, quorum est tandem philosophorum," says Cicero †. In fact, some of the ancient philosophers were able to discern the advantages which resulted from it, to the intellectual nature, and at least, in speculation to forestall the judgment of those happier sages, who directed their discipline to temper and moderate those excessive energies of the body which tended, by their full development, to weaken and impair the higher faculties. "The sickness of a certain friend," says Pliny, "gave me occasion lately to remark, that we are the best men when we are infirm. For when does avarice or lust solicit a sick man? He has no thought of pleasure; he does not seek honour, he neglects riches; then he remembers that there are Gods and that he is a man; he envies no one; he admires no one; he despises no one; and he neither attends to malignant conversation nor is he nourished by it ‡." These were a heathen's reflections, but the Christian had far greater and holier considerations to cheer his hours of sickness. "Let a wise man be brave in enduring pain; that is sufficient for the discharge of duty. That he should be joyful I do not require," continues Cicero, "for unquestionably it is a sad thing, rough, bitter, hostile to nature, difficult to endure §." Yet faith enabled the Christian to find a source of satisfaction even in the pains of sickness, by reminding him that these supplied him with an opportunity of being more conformable to his divine Saviour. In health there were many distractions calculated to make him lose all similitude with that great prototype; but on the bed of suffering he lay stretched like the blessed Jesus on the cross, and in the offering up of these pains, he found a sweetness and a consolation that surpassed all the exhilaration and joy of the most vigorous health, "as much," to use the words of St. Augustin, "as the wisdom of Job in sickness exceeded that of Adam in the strength and freshness of youth wandering in the groves." This was a phenomenon which suggested many reflections to men of philosophic observation, though, in their speculations, they too often overlooked the real secret cause of this mystery of the moral nature. The testimony to

* De Patientia.
† Tuscul. IV. 25.
‡ Epist. Lib. VIII. 26.
§ Tuscul. Lib. II.

the fact which is borne by Novalis, is assuredly remarkable, when he says, "the moment in which a man begins to love sickness or pain is perhaps that in which the sweetest pleasure is in his arms, and the highest positive delight runs through him. May not sickness be a medium of higher synthesis? The more fearful the pain, the higher the secret pleasure. Every sickness is, perhaps, a necessary beginning of the inward union of the two existences, a necessary beginning of love. Hence men can become enthusiastic for sickness and pain, and, above all, for death, as a closer union of the two existences. In general, do not the best things begin with sickness? Half of sickness is evil, the whole sickness is pleasure*?"

This passage, by a modern philosopher, would furnish an interesting commentary on what is related of many of the saints whose sentiments in sickness and death, are viewed with such contempt or incredulity by others of his religion who wanted the genius and penetration which he possessed. The Spaniards have a saying, "Where evil is, good is;" and these were occasions to demonstrate its truth. To the state of sickness in the ages of faith, there were certain duties and manners belonging, the observance of which gave rise to many lovely and astonishing scenes, which are described with beautiful simplicity in the ancient chronicles. The characteristics of the sick, like those of the dying, were changed, and wholly different from what they had been by nature. Like nectar now, men slowly sipped the most nauseous medicines, when they were reminded of the vinegar and gall. The Nurse, in the Hippolytus, says, "It is better to be the sick person than the attendant," the latter had so much to endure from the waywardness and impatience of the sufferer†. What a different portrait was seen in an Abbot Stephen, a St. Philip Neri, a St. Clare, a St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi! What a different one was drawn by the poet who had the experience of Christian ages!

> "He faded, and so calm and meek,
> So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
> So tearless, yet so tender-kind,
> And grieved for those he left behind."

* Schriften II. 287. † Eurip. 187.

How changed, too, were those who attended on the sick! It was in ages of faith that arose those institutes of mercy in which holy women, like ministering angels, devoted their lives to serve the sick. Such are those sisters of charity, and those grey sisters, who continue to perform so many miracles of charity in our unbelieving age. Men visited the sick now, not only through humanity and friendship, but as an act of devotion. "I was sick, and ye visited me," said our Lord, meaning, as he proceeded, to explain that whosoever would visit the least of his disciples in sickness would be recompensed hereafter as having visited him. Hence the sickness of the lowest attendant would be enough to reverse the plans of a whole family, and to interrupt the progress of a man in the highest authority. St. Gregory of Tours, describes his distress, on one occasion, as he was travelling, and one of his younger attendants fell sick:—"This event involved us in great loss, for the sickness of this boy put a stop to our proceeding further on the journey. I prayed earnestly to God that he might be healed; for he was always most patient of labour, and most pious*." This help of intercession, so consoling to the sick, and often through Heaven's mercy so instrumental to their recovery, was never wanting in these ages of love. When Bayard was sick in Grenoble, the writer of his life relates, that every one was praying for his recovery. Not only his uncle, the bishop, but also all the noble citizens and merchants, with all the holy religious people, monks and nuns, interceded for him, day and night. He was soon restored to health. "Et nest possible," adds this devout writer, "quen tant de peuple ny eust quelque bonne personne que Dieu ne voulust ouyr†."

Among the advantages of sickness, even in the romantic ages of chivalry, was considered its exemption from the danger of a disturbed and unsanctified death. To the eye of religion, it would have been a happier end for Bayard to have died of the distemper which attacked him in the Episcopal Palace of his holy uncle at Grenoble, than to have perished as he wished, with the Duke of Nemours, in the slaughter on Easter Sunday, at Ravenna. Aristotle, indeed, will not allow that courage

* S. Greg. Turon. Miracul. Lib. II. c. 66.
† La tres Joyeuse Hystoire, &c., chap. lv.

can be evinced in sickness* ; so that with that idea the young knight might hold it in abhorrence : but, yet, experience in any thing, as the Stagyrite admits, may give rise to courage ; and, therefore, Socrates used to call courage knowledge ; and, for the same reason, they who were acquainted with sickness and death might have had occasion to evince courage.

With regard to physical sufferings, the deep and loving familiarity in which men lived with nature, enabled them to perceive that sickness and the approach of death are not what people in health imagine them to be. " Nature, then," as Paschal says, " gives passions and desires conformable to the present state. It is the fear which we give ourselves, and not nature, which troubles us ; because it joins to the state in which we are, the passions of the state in which we are not†." But let us now draw nearer to these mourners, and behold them stretched on the bed of sickness, that we may have proof that during the ages of faith their's was truly a blessed sorrow. In the monastic histories, we have many scenes of this kind described in minute detail. The author of that affecting book, which relates the deaths of certain monks of La Trappe, writes as if from the other world, for he had been sick almost to death, so as to have received the last sacraments of the Church ; and he had made what he supposed his last discourse to the brethren, when it pleased God to delay his departure. He relates, that many of the monks of La Trappe had originally gone to that house of austere penitence, in a state of the greatest weakness and suffering of body, and had been admitted into it, from a conviction that they would give as much edification, by patience and resignation in their sickness, as others by the labours and exercises which belonged to those of robust health ‡. The father abbot of La Trappe asked brother Euthyme, whether he did not feel the solitude of the infirmary very wearisome, and whether he was not tired with having nothing to do ? To which he replied, " My days seem very short. I pass them in prayer, in reading, and in working, with my hands.

* Ethic. Lib. III. cap. 6.

† Pensees 1 Part. IX.

‡ Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe, Tom. II. 147.

Un chretien peut il s'ennuier* ?" Yet these solitary men contemplated a state of real solitude, that which inevitably awaits the worldly race, with the utmost horror. Dom Isidore II., in his last sickness, said, on one occasion, to his brethren, "How will a soul that has neglected its Judge, and which has chosen to serve the creature and not its Creator, be able to accommodate itself to that fearful solitude in which it will find itself at the hour of death? What nakedness! What dereliction! This soul, which reposed in the creature as its centre and its happiness, beholds itself all of a sudden abandoned and deprived of every support. It is not sustained by God who has rejected it: neither is it by creatures, for they are without power to give it any succour. What a solitude! What a void† !" The Abbot de Rancé says of Dom Paul Ferrand, when sick in the infirmary, "I used to visit him every morning at four o'clock. I used to find him on his knees saying his Breviary‡." Dom Basile, in his last illness, though during severe cold, used to rise and say mass a little after four o'clock. So also Dom Isidore continued to hear mass every morning; and only two days before his death, he was able to hear it in the church without being supported §.

In the middle ages, the sick had the consolation of being able to assist at the holy rites of the church till the last hour of their life. Hospitals were so constructed, that the patients who were in bed could each see the altar in the chapel; and those who were infirm in private houses were visited by the clergy, who were charged to administer this consolation to them. When sick persons were unable to leave their chamber, leave used to be given to say mass, even on the most solemn festivals, in a private oratory‖. It was the custom also, that the Psalms should be chaunted to every dying person, as may be collected from Morinus, the sacramentary of St. Eloy, and from other litargical monuments: "The ministers of the holy church of God, with the utmost reverence, ought to sing before the sick every day, the office of vespers, matins, and lauds, with the antiphons, responses,

* Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe, Tom. I. 102.

† Id. II. 127. ‡ Id. I. 32. § Id. II. 138.

‖ Benedict. XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, II. 24.

lessons, and prayers, pertaining to them." St. Gregory, of Tours, relates, that when St. Gall, Bishop of Arvernum was at the point of death; just as the morning broke, he asked what was singing in the church? They said that they were singing the Benediction; and he, commencing with the fiftieth Psalm and the Benediction, proceeded to sing the whole office of matins. But we must proceed now to the consummation of earthly woe, to the last suffering of the blessed mourners.

CHAPTER VII.

"When man," said Simonides, "is in the sweet and precious flower of youth, having a light mind, he thinks of many unaccomplishable things: for he never supposes that he will either grow old or die; nor, when in health, has he any thought of sickness. Such is their foolish mind, nor do they know how short to mortals is the time of youth and life."

Θνητῶν δ' ὄφρα τις ἄνθος ἔχῃ πολυήρατον ἥβης,
Κοῦφον ἔχων θυμὸν πόλλ' ἀτέλεστα νοεῖ.
οὔτε γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχει γηρασσέμεν, οὐδὲ θανεῖσθαι,
οὐδ' ὑγιὴς ὅτ' ἄν ᾖ, φροντίδ' ἔχει καμάτου.
νηπίοις ταύτῃ κεῖται νόος· οὐδὲ ἴσασιν
ὡς χρόνος ἐσθ' ἥβης καὶ βιότου ὀλίγος
*Θνητοῖς**.

Were we to judge from the spirit and tone of the literature of the middle ages, we might suppose that these beautiful lines of the ancient poet had ceased to be a just representation of the human mind with regard to the remembrance and contemplation of death. The Abbé Gouget observes, that the greatest number of the old poets of France loved to recall the image of death, and that they used even to introduce it into those works

* Stobæi Florileg. Tom. III. 288.

which seemed the least serious. The danse macabre was a common termination of their pieces *. The ancients did not dare in common so much as to pronounce the word which denoted it; so that, with the Latins, to die was implied in that remarkable expression, "to rejoin the majority†." Not so in Christian ages, when even by poets and orators, every particular instance of death is made an occasion for reminding men that they will themselves experience it, as in the words of Talbot, on the death of Bedford—

> "A braver soldier never couched lance,
> A gentler heart did never sway a court;
> But kings and mightiest potentates must die,
> For that's the end of human misery ‡."

And yet nothing extravagant, useless, or unnatural, was sanctioned by religion with regard to the importance which it attached to the remembrance of death. It only said, to use the words of Lombez—"Live with the same circumspection and the same humility as if you expected death every hour, and think no more of death than if you were never to die §." It is related, however, of the Archduke Leopold, of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand II., that he used to repeat every night on going to bed the prayers for the dying in recommendation of the soul, as if his sleep were to be followed by death: but of the spirit of the ages of faith in all these exercises connected with the meditation of death, we may say, in the words of Cicero, "Quæ non hoc affert, ut semper mœreamus, sed ut numquam ‖." Who doubts, who denies that, in a certain sense, death is a solemn and awful subject for the contemplation of man? From high descends the virtue, by whose aid alone he is able to meet it without terror. "In the first place," as Montaigne says, "we all come apprentices, not masters to death." We find ourselves presented with a multitude of thoughts, which are, to the greatest part of men, wholly new. "Know this well, O Socrates," says the aged Cephalus in Plato, that when any one thinks himself near death, a fear and

* Bibliotheque Français, Tom. X. 185.
† Plautus Trinummus, II. 2. 14.
‡ Hen. VI. 11. P. 2.
§ Chap. II.
‖ Tuscul. III. 16.

reflection come to him concerning things about which he had never thought before*." Of this fact poets have sometimes availed themselves, and I know not if this fearful picture be not sometimes more calculated than the gravest discourse to prepare men for contemplating their end. Witness the account given by the Monk of Melrose respecting the last hours of Michael Scott—

> "When Michael lay on his dying bed,
> His conscience was awakened:
> He bethought him of his sinful deed,
> And he gave me a sign to come with speed.
> I was in Spain when the morning rose,
> But I stood by his bed ere evening close;
> The words may not again be said
> That he spoke to me on death-bed laid.
> I swore to bury his mighty book,
> That never mortal might therein look."

This account so wrought upon the imagination of the listening knight, that when the magician's grave was opened, and he in terror took

> "From the cold hand the mighty book,
> With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound,
> He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd."

Fable and romance derive, after all, their greatest charm from their concordance with truth. Leaving them, however, for more austere studies, how fearful is it to hear a holy man, Adam de Persenna, of the Cistercian Order, speaking of the day of judgment, and saying, "Nescimus utrum dies illa nobis futura sit lucis æternæ diluculum, an, quod Deus avertat, crepusculum æternæ noctis." The dying man knows also that he will not have long to wait without being informed of this momentous doom. "Hades, Ἀιδης, is so called," says Socrates, "not, as is generally supposed, from 'not seeing,' but much rather from 'seeing and knowing all things clearly †.'" Speaking of a man dead, the Greek poet says, "He knows all about it now: ᾄδου δ' ἐν δόμοις παιδεύεται ‡." Theologians say, "that the secret judgment of God takes place in the chamber where a man dies §." "The place of the particular judgment,

* De Repub. Lib. I.
† Plato Cratylus. ‡ Eurip. Ion. 965.
§ Drexelius Tribunal Christi, Lib. I. cap. 6.

which is passed the first instant after the soul is parted from the body, is commonly thought to be that wherein a man dieth. So that God being immense and every where, raiseth in that very place his invisible seat, before which the poor soul, scarce yet out of the body, suddenly appeareth *." Then each one confesses all, and to judgment passing, speaks, and hears his fate; thence is conducted to the dwelling which suits his condition. How terrible is the thought of such a speedy and short trial! We can estimate its fears by the impressions which we feel on merely reading of the fate of the Platæans, who obtained a similar hearing from the Lacedæmonians, who took their city, though upon them it was only a temporal punishment which could be inflicted. Each one of us may be reminded of what awaits himself when he hears the question that was proposed to these unhappy citizens as they came forth at the summons of their conquerors, one by one, and each was simply asked, "Whether he had done any good service to the Lacedæmonians, or to their allies, during that present war?" They begged permission to be indulged in a few words, and not to be confined to giving a direct answer; they wished μακρότερα εἰπεῖν, and their chief speaker was for declaiming at length upon their ancient deeds of patriotism in resisting the Medes. But they were not allowed to avail themselves of any past services, but still the one short and terrible question was proposed to each as he came out; and as he was constrained to confess the truth, that he had done nothing, he was put to death, and thus they all perished †.

Strange and terrible visions and events are recorded to have taken place in various ages of the church in attestation of this speedy doom which follows death, which are not the less solemn, if explained on the ground chosen by St. Augustin, who ascribes them to the operation of angels acting by divine command. Among the letters of St. Boniface there is one relating a most awful vision, which was described to him by a man who had been miraculously restored to life, who revealed to him what his soul had seen in the other world. Guilty spirits, too,

* Meditations for the Use of the English College at Lisbon, IV.

† Thucyd. Lib. III. 68.

were known to come forth from their sepulchre, and to start up from their biers to announce to the earth the punishments of divine justice, and to say to men, "Pray not for me! I am judged, I am condemned!" Who has not heard of that vision of Alberico, from which Dante is supposed to have taken the idea of his immortal poem? But while we are on such themes, gentle reader, as Socrates says to Theætetus, "Look around and examine *μή τις τῶν ἀμυήτων ἐπακούῃ*, lest there should be present any of those persons who think that there is nothing existing but what they can grasp in their hands, and to whom *πᾶν τὸ ἀόρατον* is inconceivable and inadmissible. Truly replies the disciple, you speak of dry, hard, repulsive men. O boy, they are not exactly the children of the Muses, (adds Socrates), *Εἰσὶ γὰρ, ὦ παῖ, μάλ' εὖ ἄμουσοι.*" Trusting, however, that they are far from us at present, let us hear what was the substance of this history. Alberico, then, we read, born of noble parents at a castle near Alvito, in the diocese of Sora, in the year 1101, was seized, on completing his ninth year, with a violent fit of illness, which deprived him of his senses for several days. During this trance, he had a vision in which he seemed to be conducted by two angels through purgatory and hell, and then to be taken up into Paradise, to behold the glory of the blessed. As soon as he came to himself again, he was permitted to make profession of a religious life in the monastery of Monte Casino. As the account he gave of his vision was strangely altered in the reports that went abroad of it, Girardo, the abbot, employed one of the monks to take down a relation of it from the mouth of Alberico himself. Senioretto, who was chosen abbot in 1127, not contented with this narrative, ordered Alberico to revise and correct it, which he accordingly did, with the assistance of Pietro Diacono, his associate in the monastery, and a few years younger than himself, and whose testimony to his extreme and perpetual self-mortification, and to a certain abstractedness of demeanour, which showed him to converse with other thoughts than those of this life, is still on record. It is conjectured that Alberico lived to a good old age.

There was a similar narrative that used to be told in Melrose Abbey, respecting St. Drithelm, whose relics reposed there. This extraordinary man, the noble Thane

of Cunningham, in Northumbria, subsequently a monk and confessor, after a severe illness, rose, as it were, from the dead, and reported his vision of the other world to Hemgils, a priest, from whom Bede derived his information, as also to King Alfred himself. This vision is also related by Alcuin. These are strange relations, but there are others more fearful still, which seem to confirm the belief of Origen, that God sometimes permits the spirits or souls of the dead to become visible to men*; notwithstanding the doubt of St. Augustin, who adduces but negative arguments to disprove it, as where he concludes from the fact of his mother having never appeared to him, that the dead can never really return to the living†; though, in another place, in reply to Dulcitius, he reasons upon the ground of the possibility of their appearing‡.

In the year 1150, it is related that, on the vigil of St. Cecilia, a very old monk, an hundred years of age, at Marchiennes, in Flanders, fell asleep while sacred lessons were reading, and saw, in a dream, a monk, all clad in armour, shining like red hot iron in a furnace. The old man asked him who he was?—and hearing that he had lived among the monks of that convent, he stretched out his hand toward the spectre, but it charged him to beware how he touched it, adding, that he had yet to endure this fiery armour for ten years more, to expiate the having injured the reputation of another §. Those who are inclined to hear such narrations will observe, that the doubts of St. Augustin do not amount to denying that such a vision may have appeared, for he only infers that it was effected by the instrumentality of angels; however, Peter, the venerable abbot of Cluny, relates an event somewhat similar, which, from being attested by him, is more calculated to make a deep impression upon all. "There was a monk at Cluny," saith he, "named Bernard Savinellus. One night, as he was returning to the dormitory, after singing nocturns and lauds in the church with the brethren, he met Stephen, vulgarly called Blancus, Abbot of St. Giles, who had departed from life a few days before. At first, not knowing him,

* In Cels. Lib. II. † De Cura pro Mortuis.
‡ Lib. de Octo Dulcitii Quæstionibus.
§ Hist. des Saints de la Province de Lille et Douay, p. 377.

he was passing on, till the other spoke, and asked him, whither he was hastening? Bernard, astonished and angry that a monk should speak, contrary to the rules, in the nocturnal hours, and in a place where it was not permitted, made signs to him to hold his peace; but, as the dead abbot replied, and urged him to speak, the other, raising his head, asked, in amaze, who he might be? To whom it was answered, I am Stephen, called abbot of St. Giles, who have formerly committed many faults in the abbey, for which I now suffer pains; and I beseech you to implore the Lord Abbot, and other brethren, to pray for me, that, by the ineffable mercy of God, I may be delivered." Bernard replied, that he would do so; but added, that he thought no one would believe his report; to which the dead man answered, "In order, then, that no one may doubt, you may assure them that, within eight days, you will depart from life:" he spoke and vanished. The monk, returning to the church, spent the remainder of that night in prayer and meditation. When it was day, he related his vision to St. Hugo, who was then the abbot. As is natural, some believed his account, and others thought it was some delusion. The next day the monk fell sick, and continued growing worse, and constantly affirming the truth of what he had related, till his death, which occurred within the time specified*." But we have wandered too far amidst this darksome wilderness, where every man would rather ask than pretend to point out the way. Let us regain our road.

To all men, death comes in part as the fulfilment of the original sentence upon sin. "Mors," says St. Anselm, "is derived a morsu pomi vetiti." It is so far essentially connected with mourning, either from a consideration of sin or from a remembrance of what was paid to cancel it; or, in fine, from the natural impulse of our poor humanity. Our first mother had the consolation of hearing an angel, and of learning that glorious decree of Heaven's mercy, which ordained that her seed was to overcome the serpent; but still, nature felt the terrors of the irreversible sentence, and we read,

> "——— So much of death her thoughts
> Had entertain'd, as dyed her cheeks with pale."

* S. Petri ven. de Miraculis, Lib. I. cap. 10.

Our all-perfect and almighty Saviour, Christ Jesus, wept over the grave of dead Lazarus: and when he heard of the death of St. John the Baptist, we read, "Secessit inde in navicula, in locum desertum seorsum *." We find St. Paul saying that God had mercy on Epaphroditus, raising him from sickness, lest, by the death of so dear a friend, he should have sadness upon sadness †. We behold holy Mary too, the queen of heaven and mistress of the world, overwhelmed with sorrow beneath the cross, when

> "She saw her sweet and only child
> In desolation calm and mild,
> In life's expiring throes."

"Where is the man," exclaims the holy Church, "who would not weep if he beheld the mother of Christ in such suffering?" Far be it from the humble followers of a crucified Saviour to profess a scorn for death, which he condescended to endure. It is disarmed, it is vanquished; yet its aspect still bespeaks its origin, and the eye naturally turns from it in mourning. But if death be thus solemn to the just, to the chosen vessels, to the highly-favoured of Heaven, what shall we say respecting it, as affecting those who die subject to the wrath of God? The ancients were able to discern that there were two forms of death, widely different from each other, determined by the previous lives and character of those who suffered it. Plato speaks of these in the Phædrus, the Phædo, the Gorgias, and in the tenth book of the Republic. "The way to Hades," we read in the Phædo, "is not simple and only one; for, in that case, there would be no want of a guide, since it would be impossible to go astray: but it seems that there are many cross-ways and circuits—and those who have committed sacrileges or murders, or other great crimes, fall into Tartarus, whence they never get out. ὅθεν οὔ ποτε ἐκβαίνουσιν‡. And Socrates would remind the wicked, that, when they die, ἐκεῖνος μὲν ὁ τῶν κακῶν καθαρὸς τόπος, will not receive them, but they will have to keep company for ever with those things that resemble them, κακοὶ κακοῖς συνόντες §.

* Matt. xiv. 13.
† Ad Philippens. II.
‡ Plato, Phædo, 114.
§ Plato, Theætetus.

To the natural terrors of a guilty conscience there was added, in ages of faith, the conviction, from the knowledge of express revelation, that punishments were prepared for every lost soul of man, in the future and eternal state: and what tongue can describe that perspective of the horrors of hell, at which incredulity may for a moment laugh, but before which Voltaire himself, when dying, turned pale beyond the ghastliness of death! "This I hold, this I think certain," says St. Jerome, "that he who led an evil life cannot have a good end." "O what a difference in death," exclaims the venerable Bede, describing the last moments of a reprobate. "Stephen, in dying, beheld the heavens opened, and this unhappy man saw, as awaiting himself, hell opened! *" What think you of that night in which Chrysorius died, horribly crying out, "truce till morning, truce till morning!" as St. Gregory relates in his dialogue? † "Now say thou, who goest to spy death, if any else be terrible as this? 'Mors peccatorum pessima.'" Would you hearken for a moment to their complaints?

"Thoughts, my tormentors, arm'd with deadly stings,
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts.
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage;
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion."

"Mors peccatorum pessima." The great men of this world die full of voiceless gloom, and impenitent, die as they have lived, like the Sarassin described by Tasso:

"Argantes died, yet no complaint he made,
But as he furious liv'd he careless dies:
Bold, proud, disdainful, fierce, and void of fear,
His motions last, last looks, last speeches were ‡,
'Superbi formidabili, feroci
Gli ultimi moti fur, l'ultime voci.'"

Or their's does often resemble that terrible death which closes the poem of the Orlando Furioso,

* Lib. V. Hist. Anglor. cap. 15. † Lib. IV. cap. 38.
‡ Lib. XIX. 26.

"The indignant spirit fled, blaspheming loud,
Ere while on earth so haughty and so proud."

"Mors peccatorum pessima," mark again,

"Approach the chamber, look upon his bed,
His is the passing of no peaceful ghost;
Which, as the lark arises to the sky,
'Mid morning's sweetest breeze and softest dew,
Is wing'd to heaven by good men's sighs and tears!"

Hearken to that holy monk who is assisting the dying Marmion on the bloody field:

"O look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine:
O think on faith and bliss!
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this!"

"Mors peccatorum pessima;" I will look no more. It is every where the same, and yet this horror is but the prelude to that greater dismay when the trumpet of the judgment angel shall sound within their sepulchre crying, "Surgite, mortui!" already, however, are they made acquainted with their doom:

"They have slept the evil sleep,
That from the future tore the curtain off."

On the other hand, it is true that the judgments of God are sometimes seen in the profound obscurity in which the future is involved to the eyes of the dying and impenitent sinner, who is permitted sometimes to console himself with the epicurean's affirmation, "that death is the last line of things *." Pliny remarked the error of the common opinion, "that universally the testaments of men are a mirror of their manners, since Domitius Tullus appeared far better in his death than in his life †." But it is in the modern society that these examples of an ungrounded tranquillity are chiefly found, to which no parallel is furnished by the history of the middle ages. The Tartarus of the ancients, the cross and sinister ways

* Horace Epist. I. 10. † Epist. Lib. VIII. 18.

that Socrates speaks of, the testimony of original revelation, and primeval tradition respecting the future inexorable judges, "at whose bar," as Cicero says, "no one can have a Crassus, or a Marc Antony, or a Demosthenes, for his advocate, but every one must plead for himself," the terrible announcement of eternal fire by the voice of Him who cannot deceive, seem all alike to them, like idle tales to which they give no credit; they deny that there can be material fires, or spirits and bodies subject to them. Satan says to them, "thou shalt not burn," as he did to Adam, "thou shalt not die:" he prevents them from remarking, that there may be a doom to penal fire joining wicked souls that first had been with fleshly bodies united in ways equally wondrous and equally true. The death of a distinguished member of the Huguenot sect in France, was thus described lately by his friend. "His last words were respecting the things he had always loved: the joys and sorrows of his friends, literature, civilization, liberty, and the future prospects of France." What would Socrates have thought of one who confined his discourse to such topics at his death? When these examples were first becoming known to Christian society, they excited a horror mixed with astonishment, which is forcibly expressed by Madame de Sevigné, on relating the death of Charles II.: "Il me semble que la mort du roi d'Angleterre devient plus philosophe et Angloise que Chrétienne et Catholique. Adieu roi me fait quasi un nœud à la gorge *." But I must hasten on from the dark, and deformed, and sorrowful side of death, well pleased to leave so cruel sea behind, to illustrate from the history of the ages of faith, what we have alluded to as its beautiful side, and to view the fulfilment of this debt of nature in reference to the mourners who were blessed. Matter this not unbecoming even an heroic theme, as Homer will attest; for the question which Telemachus addresses to Nestor, after expressing the greatest reverence for his age and wisdom, was simply this "how died Agamemnon?

πῶς ἔθαν' Ἀτρείδως εὐρυκρείων Ἀγαμέμνων †;"

and with reason, since it is by their death men can be known. "In fine hominis, denudatio operum illius."

* Lett. Roy. 724. † Od. III. 248.

But who has a tongue to celebrate worthily the admirable and glorious triumph of the meek children of grace over death and the grave? Who is able to penetrate the depth of their mysterious consolations, or to conceive the ineffable sweetness and constancy of their hope? It is in reference to them that one may well be anxious to inquire from history; for who does not feel impelled to ask, in the words of Echecrates to Phædo, "What was it that these men said before death, and how did they die? for it would be a sweet thing to hear this*." Let us look upon them as we find them lying on their death-bed, where, as in the instance of St. Dunstan, they saw so many strange visions of heavenly joys, showed unto them for their great comfort. Let us leave the history of the middle ages to speak for itself, and remain but mutes or audience to this act, while it displays before us, in the language of these ancient times, the form of death, which is pronounced to be precious in the sight of God.

In the ancient monasteries, there are necrologies, in which the deaths of the brethren and benefactors are minutely described; but besides these, the monastic histories abound with similar examples. "Now that we have described the holy deeds of St. Richarius," says a venerable chronicle, "what remains but to relate the death of the just? But that should not be called death which constitutes the birth-day of a saint; for when dead to the world, then he is truly born to Christ in heaven. It is miserable to love the place of death any longer, and after experiencing its dangers, to seem unwilling to enter the port. You should rather rejoice with him, that being saved from the wreck of the world, he should now live secure and crowned with Christ, eternally safe and happy. Therefore we shall not call it the death, but the transit of this Father, who on this account is truly happy, because, despising the world, he had this transit always before his eyes. The day before his departure, when he was to receive the object of his long desire, and to be joined for ever with God, he called Sygobard his fellow soldier, saying to him, "I know, my son, I know that my end is not far off, and that I shall soon behold my King whom I have long desired to see. Do you then prepare a vessel in which my

* Plato Phædo.

body may be placed, not with superfluous study, but for necessary use, and my son, prepare also yourself with all diligence, that when that day, so near to me, and which is not far from you, shall arrive, it may find you prepared. I go the way of all the world, only may the Saviour of the world be gracious unto me, and defend me now from the enemy, who formerly redeemed me from the enemy; that whom I had as the consoler of my present life, may be a dispenser to me of eternal life." The disciple hearing him thus speak, wept much, but obeyed his orders, and when he had prepared the sarcophagus, the holy father had scarcely breath; yet still he continued to pray and to give thanks, while he fortified himself for his passage, by receiving the body and blood of Christ: amid thanksgiving and words of prayer his spirit departed *. In the same chronicle occurs the following scene: "After four years of sickness, Gervin still continuing to perform all his service to God, being inflamed by a devotion which nothing could interrupt, was apprized of his approaching deliverance in this manner. In the beginning of the year of our Lord MLXXIV., on the day when the church celebrates the presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the temple, he said mass in the crypt of the church of our monastery, and being more afflicted than usual, it was with difficulty that he was able to complete the mysteries. However, by the grace of God, having accomplished them strictly, being fatigued by such exertion, the brethren supporting him on the right and left, led him back to his room, and then he said to them, "My sweet sons, do you know I have received from St. Mary leave to depart this day?" And they asking him whither he meant to go? "whither," said he, "but to that place to which I have always desired to go, and for which I have always besought God;" but the brethren replying, "that he could still live long, in order that sacrifice to the omnipotent God might be offered by his hands," he said, "never again will brother Gervin sing mass." In fact, he never rose again from his bed, and in the beginning of Lent, on the fourth feria, he called together the elder brethren and such as were priests, and spoke to them as follows: "As the blessed Germain said to his

* Chronic. Centulensis sive Richarii, Lib. I. cap. XXI. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IV.

brother bishops, so I say to you, my sons, I commend to you, dearly beloved, my passage hence, for I perceive that the hour is at hand, when the salvation which I have long sought for from the Lord, will come to me; and this was always the intention of my prayers, that the merciful God would order my death to take place during the holy days which have lately commenced; and now since I trust that he is about to grant my petitions, I wish to confess before you, in the sight of God, all the evils which I have committed, and on account of which, I fear for my soul; believing that this confession, through the tender mercy of the Lord and your intercession, will cleanse me." Having said this while the brethren wept round him, he recited before them some grievous sins, which they all knew he had never committed; the brethren being astonished, having known the innocence of his life, said to him, "But good father, you accuse yourself of things of which it is manifest you were never guilty. Certainly you never committed adultery nor homicide." "Spare me, brethren, spare me, I beseech you, and do not load my soul; for if any have perished under my care, truly in the judgment of God, I shall have to render an account of their souls; and as for adultery, hear what Christ says: 'qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam mœchatus est eam in corde suo.' With these and other words he commended the care of his exit to God and to their prayers. Still he caused one of the brethren to sing the whole psalter to him every day, because he was himself unable. The brethren seeing that he approached his end, according to the mandate of St. James, anointed him with blessed oil, and asked him where he wished to be buried; but he would not point out any place, leaving it to their own choice, but being continually urged to do so, he said, "I will tell you what I wish you would do, but I know you will not fulfil it; fasten a rope to my foot, drag me and throw me on the dung-heap, because I do not think that I deserve any other sepulchre." He besought them, however, to carry him in his last hour into the church of St. Richarius, that there he might render his soul to God. Accordingly, on the third feria of the second week in Lent, after matins, the brethren found him in the agony, which he perceiving, with his hand he made signs to them to carry him into the church, and the brethren carried him there, and having spread

sack-cloth, they placed him before the altar of St. John the Baptist. Then having placed the crucifix before him, the congregation began the litanies, and when they came to Sancta Maria, ' ora pro eo,' he repeated the words in death ; and when they chaunted ' S. Richari, ora pro eo,' he let fall tears, and stretched out his hands, and repeated the words, and then he lapsed into quietness ; and the litanies being finished, the brethren began the commendation of the faithful ; and when they came to ' suscipiat te Christus,' his spirit departed*." Ingulphus describes the last days of Turketul, Abbot of Crowland :—" Worn down by age and labour, he expected the day of his release, devoting himself with greater assiduity to vigils and prayer, and celebrating the holy mysteries, allowing himself leisure for holy meditations, and relieving all the poor, giving food to all that sought alms, and to all the needy, and exercising every other act of charity, despising the present life, and desiring the future, neglecting nothing of the regular observances, and yet always speaking of himself as an unprofitable servant, and from his heart imploring the mercy of Christ. Once every day he used to visit the schools of the children and sons of the nobles who were educating for the priesthood or the cloister, and to examine the reading and labour of each, bringing with him some figs or raisins, or nuts, or apples, or other such little presents, to reward those who were doing well, that all might be excited, not only by words or stripes, but by prayers and rewards : he assisted divers old monks that were sick to death, and would never leave them by day or night, but would sing the regular office before them, and perform, like the cleverest youth, all proper service with his own hands. At length, in the year 975, after the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, he was seized with a fever; and on the fourth day, he assembled all the monks, forty-seven in number, with four lay-brothers, and exposed to them the state of the whole house. Then, having communicated in the sacred mysteries of Christ, he embraced the crucifix within his arms, and kissed it, with sighs and tears, and spoke such devout words to each of the wounds of Christ, that the brethren who stood near, wept abundantly ; and from the

* Ibid. Lib. IV. cap. xxxv.-vi.

hearts of many of them, as long as they lived afterwards, the memory of his devotion never departed. On the day before his death, he made a short sermon to the brethren, and warned them to be careful against accidents of fire. He departed on the day of the translation of S. Benedict, at the completion of the regular office, and passed from the cares of his abbatial government to the bosom of Abraham*."

Serlon, Bishop of Séez died in the year 1123. Some days before his death, perceiving his end to be near, after celebrating mass in his cathedral, he called the canons and officers of his church, and said to them, "I feel very weak, through age and sickness, and I see that my hour is not far distant. I commend you to God, who chose me to be your pastor, and I conjure you to pray for me. Let my tomb be prepared, for I have but a very short time to remain with you." After this discourse, he went with his clergy before the altar of the Blessed Virgin; and there, with his crosier, he pointed out the spot where he wished to be interred. Then, after saying some prayers, he sprinkled it with holy water. After this, the workmen opened the pavement, and dug the grave, and the masons built the vault: he then descended into it, and laid himself down, as if he had been dead. The following day, which was Friday, he returned to the church, and wished to say mass. He had already put on his amice, but he found himself so weak, that he was afraid he might not be able to finish the celebration, and so he caused his chaplain to say mass; after which, he assembled the canons, and said to them, "Come, all of you to me after dinner, for I wish to distribute, according to rule, the treasures which I have amassed from the revenues of the church, that no one may be able to accuse me before God. Sicut nudus in hunc mundum intravi, sic me decet nudum egredi." At three o'clock, the bishop sat down at table to dine, but he could eat nothing. During the whole repast, he spoke of God with great unction and grace. As the assistants were about to rise from table, he expired†. "When one visits the sick," says the Abbot de Rancé, "one has generally to console

* Hist. Ingulphi, p. 51.

† Recherches Historiques sur la Ville et le Diocèse de Séez, par De Maurey D'Orville, 119.

them; but this man, Dom Paul Ferrand, consoled those who came to see him die*." We have already visited the infirmary of La Trappe to watch the sick; let us now return to it to behold death. Dom Paul Ferrand assisted at tierce, high mass, and vespers, till the very eve of his departure. At the beginning of Lent, he had predicted that God would remove him hence on the same day as that on which he was pleased to die for sinners. On Maunday Thursday, he rose at half-past three in the morning, and between four and five went to the church and received our Lord. On his return to the infirmary, he said that he wanted nothing more than a bed of ashes and straw: he was most anxious to hear the death-hammer, which is always struck at the moment of a soul's departure. In the evening, he went into the church with a firm step, and received extreme unction. When the monk, who had charge of the infirmary, asked him, on his return, whether the exertion had not made him very weak? He replied, 'Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo. Moriatur anima mea morte justorum, et fiant novissima mea horum similia.' On the morning of Good Friday he expired†." When brother Joseph was dying, and already stretched upon the cross of ashes and straw, all the prayers being finished, as he seemed to desire something, he was asked if he wanted any thing, and he replied that he felt a great thirst. The monk brought him some diet drink; but this perfect disciple of Jesus Christ, who had followed his Master with such fidelity in life, desired still to follow him on Calvary. He refused to taste it, and said, "Jesus Christ felt thirst upon the cross, and would not drink." These divine words were the last he spoke; and shortly after, full of joy and consolation, he resigned his soul into the arms of Jesus Christ‡. When Dom Isidore lay at the point of death, having been silent for a long time, at length, about nine o'clock in the evening, as if he had just awoke from a profound sleep, he began to chant the praise of God with a loud voice, and with such force, that he was heard distinctly in all the adjoining chambers. He began with

* Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe, Tom. I. 28.

† Id. Tom. I. ‡ Id. Tom. I. 152.

the litanee of Jesus, and with that of the saints, adding the collects, and many other prayers, the Benedictus, the Magnificat, the Psalm Laudate Dominum de Cœlis, with the hymn and prayers in honour of the Blessed Virgin; and he departed in the very act of singing to resume the chant in the choir of angels*." When Dom Alberic Godinot was stretched on the cross of ashes at the point of death, an ancient friend, who had come to see him, was weeping by his side; but the holy man rebuked him, saying, "You ought to be ashamed to weep for me. Rejoice, my brother, and be not afflicted. Behold the time of my joy and of my happiness†." "Dom Dorothee died without appearing to suffer any agony, after he had had a full presentiment of the hour of his death. During the last hours of life, Dom Isidore never ceased invoking the saints, and saying, 'Benedicite spiritus et animæ justorum Domino, benedicite sancti et humiles corde Domino.' In the evening, he desired himself to be placed on the bed of ashes; and all the community, on coming out from the collation, came to him, and recited the prayers for those who are in their agony; but he was in an ecstacy of joy: he continued to speak of God and of his mercies till eleven o'clock, when he made signs to the monk who watched over him, to raise him up so as to sit upright; but the monk not understanding him, he repeated the sign; and still the monk, not knowing what to do, the other monks came round, and began to consult together what it was that he wished to say. Dom Isidore, fearing that their zeal to serve him would lead some of them to speak, and so break their rule ‡, raised his hand on high, and said, in a low tone of voice, full of sweetness and reverence, 'Silence, my fathers, silence!' A few moments after he expired, in peace and perfect possession of his faculties§." "When the father abbot of La Trappe had administered extreme unction to brother Euthyme, the holy sufferer said, aloud, 'That he hoped, in the goodness of God, and that he trusted in his mercy.' 'I asked him,' says the Father Abbot, 'if he expected all from his goodness, without depending in

* Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe, I. 383.

† Id. II. 33.

‡ It was after Complin.

§ Id. II. 147.

the least upon his works, and if he sincerely renounced his past life.' 'I renounce it,' replied he, with a firm tone; 'and I hope all from the goodness of God; it is so great, that he has compassion and mercy upon those who are unworthy as I am.' This poor brother died in such peace, that it was like a lamp which goes out without any one perceiving it. We did not know whether he was dead, or whether he yet breathed; but he had departed*." "Brother Peter Durant was three months sick; and during the whole time, he never failed a single day, not even on that of his death, to say his office on his knees. He went to the church at four o'clock in the morning to receive the last sacraments. Two minutes before his death, he was regarding the crucifix with affectionate eyes, and saying, 'The just crucified for the unjust!' The brethren who recited the prayers around him did not perceive when he was dead, so gentle and happy was his passage†." "When brother Zeno was dying, after the community had recited the prayers of the agony, he saluted all the brethren with inclinations of the head, and with an air of sweetness, and cheerfulness, and gratitude; and, above all, with an expression of peace which filled them with consolation. A quarter of an hour before his death, one asked him what were his dispositions at the moment: and he replied in two words, 'Patience and mercy.' Some instants after, without any convulsion or effort, he rendered up his soul into the hands of Jesus Christ‡."

But let us repair to other places for illustrations of death in ages of faith.

Frodoard, in his History of the Church of Rheims, speaks as follows of the abbot, St. Theodulph. "He lived to the age of ninety, enjoying the finest old age, distinguished by his long white hair, amiable and smiling in his countenance, temperate in his manners, full of charity, liberal in alms, magnanimous in contempt for the world; and never did any pain or fever, or fatigue of body, or accident, or pain of the soul, prevent him from his prayers, and from performing the works of the Lord, as long as his blessed soul animated his body. At length,

* Relations de la Mort de Quelques Religieux de l'Abbaye de la Trappe. II. 147.

† Id. II. 269. ‡ Id. 303.

one day, as he entered the Church to matins, being seized with slight symptoms of fever, he felt moved to recommend his soul to God, and continued in devout prayer till sunrise, when he returned joyfully to his cell; and when his hour arrived, making his peace with all the brethren, with eyes and hands raised to heaven, he rendered up his blessed soul to his Creator *." When the humble and blessed friar James, who was a simple, unlearned lay brother, of the order of St. Francis, came to die, having begged pardon of all the religious who were assembled, he took a wooden cross, which he had at his bed's head, and kissed it, and put it to his eyes, and then, with great tenderness, although he was simple and unlearned, said in Latin, "Dulce lignum, dulces clavos, dulcia ferens pondera, quæ sola fuisti digna sustinere Regem cœlorum et Dominum." All who were present were astonished—for none of the religious had ever heard the humble man say such like words in Latin. Having uttered these words, he gave up his spirit to our Lord †. St. Isidore, of Seville, feeling the approach of death, went into the church, assembled the people, made them a fine exhortation, then offered prayers to God, and rendered up his soul in presence of them all.

There are some affecting details recorded of the sickness and death of the great Abbot Suger. In his last illness he came down, supported on both sides, into the chapter-room, where the monks were assembled, and then he made a discourse on the judgments of God, the most moving they had ever heard. He then fell at their feet, and prayed them, with tears, to pardon the many faults of his administration and conduct during the thirty years that he had governed the house. They could only reply by their tears. Then he told them that he came there to judge himself, and that he concluded himself to have been unworthy of the office of abbot, and that he deposed himself, and remitted into their hands his crosier and all authority, conjuring them to proceed at once to a new election, that he might have the happiness to die a simple monk. He wished St. Bernard to come to assist him, but the saint was unable: however, he wrote to him a most affecting letter. "Brother Ber-

* Liv. I. chap. 25.

† Ribadeneira, Lives of the Saints, Novem. 11.

nard wishes, to his very dear and very intimate friend, Suger, by the grace of God, abbot of St. Denis, the glory which springs from a good conscience, and the grace which is a gift of God. Fear not, man of God, to put off the earthly man, of which the weight sinks you down to the earth, and drags you almost to the abyss, that man of sin which torments, oppresses, persecutes you! What have you in common with these vestiges of an unhappy mortality, you who are about to be clothed with glory?" Such was the commencement of his letter. Towards Christmas the weakness became so great, that Suger believed his last moments were arrived, and he felt happy at the prospect of his deliverance; but thinking that his death would interrupt the joy that ought to accompany those holy solemnities, he prayed to God to prolong his life till after the festival. His prayer was heard, and after three weeks he expired*.

In the year 1148, St. Malachy, from Ireland, was seized with illness while staying in the Abbey of Clairvaux. Having celebrated the festival of All Saints with great joy, he assembled the monks on the third of November, and told them that God had heard him, and that he was to die in their arms. He departed after midnight.

In the year 1370, when Pope Urban was seized with his mortal illness, soon after his return to Avignon, he ordered the doors of his palace to be set open, that all the world might be more impressed by witnessing his death. "It must have been a very affecting and edifying sight, (says a writer of that time) to behold a Pope extended like a poor man, on a sorry bed, clothed in the habit of St. Benedict, which he always wore, his crucifix in his hands, and showing the signs of the greatest piety, penance, and resignation." Pope Leo IX. died in the church of St. Peter at Rome, while sitting near the tomb which he had prepared for himself. St. Chrysostom died on his forced journey to the shores of the Euxine, in the church of St. Bailisque, into which the soldiers had allowed him to enter.

These are affecting and memorable records. But how deeply interesting to be able to assist at the last moments of the great and blessed St. Francis of Assissi! We read that at his death he said he wished to appear before his

* Hist. de Suger, Liv. VI.

Judge naked and stripped of every thing. Then causing the passion out of St. John to be read, he began to recite the Psalm, "Voce meâ ad Dominum clamavi, voce meâ ad Dominum deprecatus sum. Effundo in conspectu ejus orationem meam, et tribulationem meam ante ipsum pronuntio Educ de custodia animam meam ad confitendum nomini tuo: me expectant justi, donec retribuas mihi." With these words he departed.

Arnulph, a nobleman of Flanders, converted miraculously by St. Bernard to a religious life at Clairvaux, coming to die, after receiving the sacraments, exclaimed suddenly, "Vera sunt omnia, domine Jesu, vera sunt quæ dixisti." Some thought that he was raving; but he went on to explain, saying that the promise of Christ was fulfilled, which affirmed that there was no one who had left house or brethren, or sister or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for him and for his Gospel, who did not receive in this world an hundred-fold, and in the future, life everlasting *.—St. Anthony found the dead body of St. Paul the Hermit kneeling on the ground, the head raised, and the hands spread towards heaven. At first he thought that he was alive, and was praying.—Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, describes a very solemn scene connected with the death of a poor novice in that abbey. "I came to him, (says the holy abbot) as usual after vespers with the brethren, and we found him in great suffering. He then received from my hands the celestial food of our Lord's body; after which, he lost his speech. In silence he remained all that night and the whole of the following day, till the vesper hour, when suddenly he broke forth aloud, to our great astonishment, with the words, "Domine miserere, chare Domine miserere, Domine misericordiam;" and so he continued repeating these words, and invoking St. Martin. With this long and uninterrupted supplication for mercy, in the presence of us who knelt round him praying, and on the day of the Holy Innocents, did this innocent soul depart from the miseries of this life, and as is allowable to believe, attain to the mercy which he so devoutly invoked †."

* Drexelius, Tribunal Christi, Lib. I. cap. 10.

† Pet. Ven. Abb. Clun. IX. Epist. Lib. I. 4, Bibliothec. Cluniacens.

It was in the year 1157, that Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, went the way of all flesh. His departure was in this manner. On the vigil of the Nativity of our Lord, entering the chapter as usual, in good health, he heard the announcement of the blessed festival, and after the manner of Cluny, he adored with the most humble prostration. After the lesson and the absolution of the dead, he began a sublime discourse on the preaching of the nativity and the announcement by the prophets; when suddenly, in the midst of his discourse, his eyes overflowed with a torrent of tears, and falling down, he was borne out of the chapter by the hands of his children, who were almost distracted through grief: he remained very ill the whole of that day and the following night, till the first dawn of the morning of the Nativity; and at the very hour in which Christ is believed to have come into the world, did he leave the world, and proceed to celebrate the solemnity of our Lord's birth with angelic spirits *.

Paschasius Radbert relates that St. Adalhard, Abbot of Corby, in the ninth century, said mass to the last, and preached twice on the day before his death. He expired a little after midnight on the Circumcision; and his last words were full of joy. With hands and eyes raised to heaven, he said aloud the Nunc Dimittis: then, after adding that he only desired the divine will might be done, he continued with a joyful voice, though full of the gravity of faith, "I shall go hence and repair to my God. Joyfully I shall repair to him; joyfully I shall die, and joyfully I shall pass the mighty gulf of this life, since I am about to arrive at everlasting joys, which have been for a long time promised to me †."

How quickly were these mourners comforted by their Divine Master! Behold St. Francis Xavier in the island of Sancian, on the confines of China, dying in a wretched open cabin on a desert mountain, without any worldly assistance—but yet overwhelmed with all kinds of spiritual benediction! Claudius Poujol, a monk of Einsiedelin, of most holy life, was not prevented by his mortal illness from going to communion in the church on the last

* Abbat. Clun. Chronologia.

† Vita S. Adalhardi, Mabillon Acta S. Ord. Benedic. Sæc. IV. p. 1.

morning of his life *! The death of Hugue of St. Victor can only be related as we find it in Durandus; for the circumstances attending it are such as to defy comment. When this great doctor lay on his death-bed, he asked for the body of our Lord; but as his stomach could retain no food, the brethren, distracted between the impulse of humanity and reverence for our Lord, offered him an unconsecrated host, which he rejected, asking God to pardon them for what they had done: then they, in great astonishment, brought him the body of our Lord, which he was unable to receive. Upon which, raising his hands to heaven, he prayed aloud, saying, "Ascendat filius ad patrem, et spiritus ad eum qui fecit illum;" with which words his spirit departed, and the body of our Lord was no more seen †.

Hitherto, it is true, we have only beheld the last moments of men who may be considered as real philosophers—men who had followed the path of perfection in a religious life. But, during the early and middle ages, we might discover innumerable instances of the same form of death, within the walls of the palace, the castle, or the cottage. Every where alike, the priest and the dying man would speak together respecting the future world; and as Chateaubriand remarks, the sublime scene which antiquity presented but once in the death of the chief of its philosophers, was repeated every day in the humble cabin of the lowest Christian who expired. St. Servulus was a beggar and a paralytic from his childhood, who used to be carried daily into the portico of the church of St. Clement at Rome, where he was supported by the alms of the faithful, and where he himself used to relieve other poor. He used to get pilgrims and poor people to read the Holy Scriptures to him, and to repeat the Psalms. His death occurred in the year 590. As he was dying, while they chanted round him, he suddenly ceased to sing, and said, "Hark! do you not hear that sweet melody in the sky?" And with these words he expired.

St. Vincent de Paul was summoned to St. Germain-en-Laye, to assist Louis XIII. in his last moments. The first words of the holy priest, as he approached the dying

* Tschudi Einsiedlische Chronik. 218.

† Durandus Rationale, Lib. IV. 41.

king, were, "Sire, Timenti Dominum benè erit in extremis." The king was so familiar with this sacred language, that he immediately replied in finishing the verse, "Et in die defunctionis suæ benedicetur!" Suger describes the edifying conduct of the King, Louis-le-Gros, when he was seized with the sickness which he thought would prove fatal. Suger was then constantly present with him by night and by day. The religious prince had, through all his life, cherished the desire to die in the Abbey of St. Denis, where he had been educated; and he wished to be transported there on this occasion, but he found himself too weak to bear the motion. Assembling all the bishops and abbots of his suite round his bed, he made his confession, and received absolution from them all. Then he distributed to churches and hospitals all his gold, silver, and precious furniture, giving even his clothes and the hangings of his bed, in order to imitate, as he said, "the nakedness and poverty of his Saviour, who died for him." Thus reduced to poverty, he prepared himself to receive the last sacraments. During all his sufferings, which were very great, he never testified the least impatience or trouble: gentle and affable to every one, he consoled all who approached him. Causing himself to be carried into the chapel, there on his knees, though obliged to be supported, and with every expression of the utmost humility, he adored our Lord. Then he made a discourse to his son, exhorting him to prove himself a good prince, to be always the protector of the church, the father of the poor, and never to commit wrong. Then, after making his confession of faith with as much precision as if he had been a most able theologian, he received the communion, and almost immediately afterwards found himself better, so as to be able to return to his chamber, where, however, he was again placed on his bed; on that poor bed which was now stripped of all the ornaments which had so lately adorned it. At this moment Suger, struck with such an alteration, could not refrain from tears; but the king said, "Dear friend, do not weep to see me in this state, but rather rejoice that God has given me grace to prepare myself for receiving death by this voluntary act of renunciation." In a few days he was sufficiently recovered to ride on horseback to St. Denis, to return thanks to God for his recovery, where he remained for a long time

prostrate in prayer. Suger remained in his abbey spiritually refreshed by such an example of piety. When, at last, this great king came to die, he wished to be transported to St. Denis, but again he was too weak to bear movement. He caused some tapestry to be spread on the ground, and ashes in form of a cross to be strewn over it, and himself to be placed upon it; and upon this bed of penitence he expired in the act of making the sign of the cross.

In like manner, Henry III. of England, in the year 1272, after confessing his sins at first secretly, and afterwards in public before all the prelates and monks, who were present at his last moments, caused himself to be placed upon a bed of ashes, on which he expired.

Christine de Pisan gives a minute account of the last hours of the great and wise King of France, Charles V. "In order to give some recreation and comfort to his servants, whom he saw greatly afflicted on account of his sickness, he caused himself every day to be raised up, dressed, and placed at table; and, however weak, he would still address to them some words of consolation and of good advice, without any complaint or sign of grief, but only invoking the name of God, of our Lady, and of the Saints. Two days before his death, after a most grievous night, he rose in this manner, and spoke to all his attendants with a very joyous countenance, saying, 'Rejoice, my good loyal friends and servants, for within a short hour I shall be out of your hands.' They supposed, from the joy of his countenance, that he alluded to his recovery; but he said this to intimate his approaching departure from this world of sorrow. On the day of his death, which was the Sunday, he desired to behold the crown of thorns of our Saviour and his own coronation crown, which were both brought to him by the Bishop of Paris and by the Abbot of St. Denis. That of the thorns he received with great devotion, tears, and reverence, placing it before his face; and that of his coronation was put under his feet. Then he began this prayer to the holy crown. 'O precious crown, diadem of our salvation! how sweet and delicious is the joy which thou givest by the mystery which is comprised in thee, if, indeed, He be propitious to me, with whose blood thou wert bedewed, as my spirit rejoices in the visitation of his worthy presence:' and then a long

prayer he said very devoutly: after which, directing his words to the coronation crown, he said, 'O crown of France, how art thou precious and preciously vile! precious, considering the mystery of justice contained in thee; but vile, and viler than all things, if we regard the labour, anguish, torment of heart, body, and conscience, yea, peril as to the soul, which thou bringest to those who bear thee! And he that should well consider these things, would rather leave thee lying in the mire than lift thee up from it to place thee on his head.' Then the king uttered many remarkable words, full of great faith, devotion, and gratitude to God, so that all who heard him were moved to great compassion and tears. After this, mass was celebrated, and the king desired that lauds and benedictions should be sung to God with organs and melodious chant. Then he received the last sacraments, after which he blessed his sons and all who stood by his side, and then the history of the Passion was read to him; and near the end of the Gospel of St. John, he expired in the arms of the Seigneur de la Riviere *."

Is it not true, that the death of these Catholic kings was a sublime and instructive spectacle? But, that our knowledge may extend to the full, let us go now and mark the mien worn at the last by those men, whose profession of arms, and lives spent amidst the distractions of war, would lead one to fear that their's, at least, could not have been a holy death. We shall find that, in the middle ages, even these rough warriors, who died begging pardon and pardoning all the world, corresponded in their last moments, in some degree, with that type of sanctity, which faith had so widely diffused; and that they were far from experiencing those fearful horrors and dreadful agitations, which attend the departure of those who die the death that hath no end. To most of them, one might have applied the words of Macbeth, alluding to Duncan,—"He is in his grave. After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well." For mark their last moments. Behold them heavy with death, bowed unto the ground, yet making "their eyes unfolded upward, gates to heaven:"—

* Christine de Pisan, Livre des Fais et Bonnes Meurs du Sage Roy, Charles V. Lib. III. chap. 71.

" Praying forgiveness of th' Almighty Sire
Amidst that cruel conflict, on their foes,
With looks that win compassion to their aim."

Such spirits Dante found in Purgatory. They said to him,

" ——————— We all
By violence died, and to our latest hour
Were sinners, but then warn'd by light from heaven,
So that, repenting and forgiving, we
Did issue out of life at peace with God,
Who with desire to see him, fills our hearts *."

In the same circle Manfredi appears to him, and says,

" —— When by two mortal blows
My frame was shatter'd, I betook myself
Weeping to him, who of free will forgives.
My sins were horrible; but so wide arms
Hath goodness infinite, that it receives
All who turn to it."

Further on he meets a spirit, who can give a more consoling history of his end. " Wounded I came to the bank of Archiano,

" —— Fleeing away on foot,
And bloodying the plain. Here sight and speech
Fail'd me: and finishing with Mary's name,
I fell, and tenantless my flesh remain'd."

Shakspeare makes Hotspur exclaim, when Prince Henry's sword had robbed him of his youth, that he could prophesy, but that the earthy and cold hand of death lay on his tongue.

When William the Conqueror was laid on his deathbed, he confessed aloud to many priests, and in presence of the nobles of England and Normandy, all the sins of his life from his youth, and then, with many tears, implored their suffrage. Villars, in a later age, furnishes another example. Wounded at the battle of Malplaquet, he is in such danger, that it is proposed he should receive the sacraments, and in private. " No, no," said

* Purg. V.

he, "since the army has not been able to see Villars die like a hero, it shall see him die like a Christian."

But what shall we say of death as connected with that chivalry, which, in the middle ages, sought to restore to the Church the cradle of Christianity, and to the arts their ancient country, which pushed forward its forests of brilliant lances to the summits of the Alps and of the Pyrenees? Let the Muse of Tasso come to our aid. Hear how Godfrey, unmoved in look, in gesture, or in thought, addresses the Christian warriors on the approach of the Pagan host:—

"—— A crown prepare you to possess
Of martyrdom, or happy victory;
For this I hope, for that I wish no less,
Of greater merit and of greater glory.
Brethren, this camp will shortly be
A temple sacred to our memory,
To which the holy men of future age,
To view our graves, shall come in pilgrimage *."

And hear again how he speaks of the crusaders slain:—

"But such a death and end exceedeth all
The conquests vain of realms, or spoils of gold;
Nor aged Rome's proud stately capitol
Did ever triumph yet like their's behold;
They sit in heaven on thrones celestial,
Crowned with glory for their conquest bold.
But thou who hast part of thy race to run,
With haps and hazards of this ytoss'd,
Rejoice, for those high honours they have won,
Which cannot be by chance or fortune cross'd †."

But why have recourse to poetic fabling, when history is so rich in splendid instances? Ulrich Baier, the Komthun of Tapiau, fell in the battle of Sudauen, in the year 1281, fighting against the infidels in Prussia. "His death," says the historian, "was felt bitterly by the whole Teutonic order. As he had wished, so he died: like his Saviour, he had received four wounds in his hands and feet, and the mortal wound in his heart. By

* Book VIII. 15. † Book VIII. 44.

his side lay four other knights slain. His wish was, 'Ut possem vulnerari ab eis V vulneribus, sicut Christus pro me fuerat vulneratus *:' and the historian relates, 'Recipit in pedibus et manibus vulnera et quintum in corde.'" In fine, the death of the laity, in ages of faith, had often all those characteristic features of a sanctified and blessed end, which have appeared so admirable in men whose lives had been wholly and professedly devoted to God. John Corvinus, waivode of Transylvania, general of the army of the Hungarian king, who saved that country from the Turks, and one of the greatest heroes of Christendom, when on his death-bed, would not allow them to administer to him in his apartment the last assistance of religion; for such was his devotion, full of reverence, that he caused himself to be carried into the church. Priuli, the illustrious doge of Venice, whose life is recorded in a curious manuscript in the Library of St. Mark, in like manner, received the last consolations of religion in the church. He expired immediately after receiving the holy communion, with the words, "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum et populum meum." St. Homobonus, a married tradesman or merchant, a native of Cremona, died like some blessed monk or confessor. In the year 1197, going one night, according to his custom, to matins, sound and well, to the church of St. Giles, after the office he applied himself to prayer before a crucifix, where he remained till the first mass, and when the priest had said the Gloria in Excelsis, he extended his arms in form of a cross, and without any sickness or noise, rendered up his soul to God, and was buried in that church, amidst the tears and regrets of all the people.

But why do I speak only of men, since we find that, in these devout ages, neither the weakness of age or sex was able to counteract the sublime and wondrous influence of religion in annihilating the terrors incident to our nature at the prospect of its change? As we have already seen, sweet, and in an especial degree blessed, was the death of youth. What a beautiful description of a holy end is given by Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, describing that of a certain good youth, whom he calls his dear child John, whose puerile innocence was

* Dusburg, c. 101.

united with such a promise of future fruit*? It is related of a certain student in an English Catholic college, who died in his fourteenth year, that being asked by a priest whether he had a great love for Jesus Christ, he replied, "O my sweet Jesus, thou knowest that I love thee with my whole heart," and that saying these words, he expired. The description of the death of many of the young students in the college of St. Acheul, recalls the most affecting incidents in the history of a St. Stanislaus or a St. Louis Gonzaga. Drexelius speaks of an innocent little boy, who, in dying, seemed at first in great pain and anguish, till opening his eyes suddenly, and looking up to heaven, he assumed instantly a joyful smile, and even laughed aloud, so that the persons present doubted not that he was consoled by a vision of angels. "William Elfinston, when a youth, admitted into the society of Jesus, after a month was seized with a mortal illness. The joy which he expressed in countenance and in words was incredible, never ceasing to return thanks to God. At length he broke out into an ecstasy, and asked the persons present if they did not see the angel with whom he spoke? and some one asking what was the appearance of the angel, he replied that he resembled a certain youth who happened to be present. Thus in great joy and sweetness did his soul depart to Christ†."

Equally remarkable was the firmness evinced by those who were in the weakness of life's extremest verge. The old died like the young. The Egyptians, as Pliny relates, thought that the human heart diminished with age, so that, after a hundred years, its decrease would necessarily occasion death. Had they been familiar with examples like the preceding, the absurdity of such an idea would have struck them, judging only from the moral effects which were displayed in the benignity, cheerfulness, and magnanimous resolution with which old men died. St. Gregory compares the human life to three watches of the night. The death of the aged, in fact, corresponded with the state of those who kept the third watch, and who already beheld the dawn.

But how wondrously was the power of faith displayed in enabling the weak and timid sex to meet death with

* Epist. Lib. IV. 42.

† Drexelius, Tribunal Christi, Lib. I. cap. 10.

heroic courage, with a profound and smiling calm, with an unshrinking, unconquerable reliance on the promises of religion! When the venerable Mother de Chantal was on her death-bed, as the clergy repeated round her the prayers of the Church for the recommendation of the soul, she listened with great attention, and evinced a sublime tranquillity. Several times she was overheard exclaiming in the midst of the service, "My God, what beautiful prayers *!" That illustrious woman played with her last breath, evincing an evenness of mind, shaped as if with an especial view to astonish the schools of old philosophy, which never condescended to describe a woman's death. That remark, "What beautiful prayers!" would have filled Plato with admiration, if not with envy.

St. Rusticule, abbess of the convent which St. Cæsareus had founded at Arles, died in the year 632. Her last sickness is thus described:—"It happened on a certain Friday, that after singing vespers as usual with her nuns, perceiving herself fatigued, she went beyond her strength in making the usual reading; she knew that she was shortly to pass to our Lord. On the Saturday morning she felt cold, and lost the use of her limbs. Lying down on a little bed, she was seized with fever, but she never ceased praising God, with her eyes raised to heaven. She commended to Him her daughters, whom she was about to leave orphans, and with a firm soul she comforted those who wept around her. She found herself still worse on Sunday; and as it was her custom that her bed should only be made once a year, the servants of God begged permission to give her a less hard bed, but she would not consent. On the Monday, which was the day of St. Laurence, she lost all strength, and her breathing became difficult. At this sight the sad virgins of Christ poured forth tears and sighs. It being the third hour of the day, as the congregation, in its affliction, repeated the Psalms in silence, the holy mother, in displeasure, asked, 'Why she did not hear the chanting of Psalmody?' The nuns replied, 'That they could not sing through grief.' 'Only sing still louder,' she replied, 'in order that I may receive the benefit of it; for that is very sweet to me.' The next day, her body hav-

* Marsollier, Vie de Mde. de Chantal, II. 180.

ing hardly the power of motion, her eyes, which preserved their lustre, shone like the stars, and looking on all sides, and not being able to speak, she made signs with her hand, that they should cease weeping, and be comforted. When one of the sisters felt her feet, she said it was not yet time; but shortly after, at the sixth hour of the day, with a serene countenance, and eyes that seemed to smile, this glorious and blessed soul passed to heaven, and joined the innumerable choir of saints*." The Countess de Russelmonde, who died a Carmelite, desired that the Passion of Christ might be read to her in her last moments. She continued to indicate where the reader ought to pause, till he pronounced the words, "Tradidit spiritum;" and at that moment her spirit departed. Drexelius speaks of a holy matron who died smiling, so that a sweet smile remained on her features after death†. But the affecting account which St. Jerome gives of the death of the venerable Paula surpasses, in interest, every description that we could find elsewhere:—"This illustrious woman," he says, "perceived that her last hour was at hand; but calm and joyous, as if she was about to leave strangers, and to revisit her family, she repeated the words of the Psalm: 'O Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house, and the place which is the habitation of thy glory‡.' 'How beautiful are thy tents, O God, of virtue; my soul desireth after thee, and rejoices, in hope of being admitted into the abode of the Lord§.' And, 'I had rather be the last in the house of my God than dwell in the tent of the sinner||.' And when I asked her, why she kept silence, and did not answer, and whether any thing caused her grief, she said to me, in the Greek language, that she felt no regret, but that she was absorbed in the contemplation of that rest and perfect tranquillity to which she was approaching. This answer was the last that she uttered. She closed her eyes, and, as if quite detached from all mortal things, she was only occupied in murmuring, with a voice almost unintelligible, the sacred texts which I have repeated. She placed her finger on her mouth, to trace upon her lips the sign of Christ,

* Acta Sanct. Ord. Benedict., Tom. II. 146.
† Thom. Cantips. Lib. II. Mirac. c. 50.
‡ Ps. xxv. 8. § Ps. lxxxiii. 2. || Id.

and then she fell into her agony: her soul, ready to fly away, summoned her last strength previous to the dissolution of life, to give thanks to the Lord. There were there many holy bishops, and several priests and Levites, who had come from Jerusalem and other cities adjacent. Troops of monks and virgins filled the whole monastery. As soon as Paula had heard the words of the Canticle, 'Rise my well-beloved, my Dove; behold the Winter is passed, and has withdrawn, behold the rain has ceased*,' she made a last effort, and replied, 'The flowers have covered the earth, and it is time to gather them†;' yes, 'I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living‡.' And with these words she expired. Then there was no sound heard of weeping or lamentation as at the last moments of people of this world, but all resounded with the music of sacred hymns. The holy bishops themselves took up the body of the deceased, and a certain number of the priests, accompanied it with lighted tapers, while others chanted psalms. It was deposited in the grotto where the Saviour was born, having been conducted by an immense multitude, which this pious ceremony had collected from all the cities of Palestine. No solitary recluse for that day wished to remain in his retreat, and there was no virgin who did not leave her cell. It would have been deemed by every one an impiety not to have hastened to show the last honours to the illustrious deceased. Widows and the poor wept while they showed the vestments which they owed to her charity, and all the unhappy whom she had consoled, cried out, that they had lost their mother. It was astonishing to observe that death had not changed her countenance. A sweet calm, mixed with gravity, was painted on all her features; so that she seemed not dead, but sleeping a peaceful sleep. The prayers for her were continued during the whole week. The following was her epitaph:—Paula, descendant of the Gracchi, sprung from the illustrious blood of the great Agamemnon, Paula, who owed her origin to the celebrated Scipio, reposes in this tomb. She was the mother of Eustochium: her rank was illustrious here below among

* Cant. II. 10. † Cant. II. 11.
‡ Ps. xxvi. 13.

the Roman nobility, but she renounced vain earthly honours to imitate the poverty of Christ, and she came to conceal her life in Bethlehem*."

Such, then, are a few of the examples which the history of the ages of faith affords us, when we examine it in reference to the mourning of men in their last hours, and in their death. Such was the manner of their departing. Thus simply and sweetly did they die, without any affectation of false philosophy evincing the insincerity and pride of a Possidonius, or desire of acting a scene to receive the plaudits of fellow-creatures, springing from that lofty and vain exaggeration of soul which seemed so magnificent to Cicero. Had we sufficient time to develope fully this view of history, and to point out all the collateral instruction to be derived from it, the present would be an excellent occasion for exposing the insane presumption of those innovators, who asserted and attempted to prove, by theological reasoning, that faith and true piety had perished in the middle ages—for there was then nothing singular or extraordinary in the scenes which are here described. Here were no doctrines contrary to what was professed by the universal Church. It was the spirit of the times to die thus. I know, indeed, that the best answer to the propositions of heresy would be found in the lives and writings of these children of grace; but, methinks, even in their death, they supply us with enough to disprove the calumny of their adversaries, and to answer the ends of a solid and practical refutation. But the limits appointed to our course will not permit any further delay: let the reader pursue the inquiry for himself: for us it will be sufficient to take leave of the subject with the words of the sacred page, "Ecce quomodo moritur justus, et nemo percipit corde: et viri justi tolluntur, et nemo considerat." However, somewhat still remains to be done; for as it seemed best not to interrupt these narratives, to explain as they occurred the many things contained in them which, in an historical and philosophic sense, deserve particular attention, it will be necessary now to retrace our steps, taking a brief survey of them in general, in order to complete our view of the character which the mourning attendant upon death had assumed, and of the duties and manners to

* S. Hieronymi Epist. ad Eustochium, Virg.

which it gave rise. In the first place, we must have been struck with the uniformity which distinguished the monastic observances in regard to death. In fact, these, which recalled but the customs of the primitive Christians, were every where nearly the same. "When a monk was sick, and in prospect of death, a servant brother was appointed, who should have nothing else to do but to tend him day and night. The cross was placed before his face, and every night a wax taper was kept burning by his side until broad day. Monks were allowed to be in attendance on him in order to sing the regular hours, and to read the Passion in his extremity. The servants, who had experience in such things, were to watch the proper moment, and to spread the ashes, and gently to place the sick man upon them, and then to give a signal, by striking the door of the cloister, when all the brethren were to run to the chamber, for this was one of the two occasions when it was permitted them to depart from their usual measured pace, the other being in the event of fire. If mass should be celebrating, or any regular office, all who were without the choir were to hasten, but those within were to remain. If the monks were in the refectory, the reading was to be instantly suspended, and the monks were to hasten. The litanee was then to be chanted, and the prayers according to the progress of his agony*.

The manner of professing penitence by the reception of ashes was well known, as Mabillon shows in the sixth age. Thus Severus Sulpicius describes the death of St. Martin, who, in his last hour, desired his disciples to prepare some vile couch for his body, saying, "Non decet filii Christianum nisi in cinere et cilicio mori." On these occasions, the sack-cloth was spread on the ground, ashes were strewed upon it in form of a cross, and the persons who assisted a dying person gently placed him upon it. The laity often observed this custom at their death, as we have seen recorded of Louis VI. of France, and Henry III. of England. The monk of St. Denis also relates that Louis IX. gave up the ghost on sackcloth and ashes, and with his arms composed in form of a cross†. It

* Antiq. Consuetud. Cluniacens. Monastic. cap. 29. Apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IV.

† Mabillon Præfat. in 1. Sæcul. Benedict. § 9.

was a pious custom, as early as in the sixth century, for Christians, in their last hours, to be carried into the church to die before the altar. This appears in the acts of Saints Benedict, Maur, Gilda, and others; and Bede gives a similar account of the death of St. Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarn. Universally, the image of our Lord on the cross was placed before the bed of the dying man. "Sometimes it happens," says a holy priest, writing at the time when modern manners had superseded those of faith, "that, on being called to assist at the last moments of some noble, there is not one crucifix to be found in all his superb apartments, where such care has been taken to leave no material want unsupplied. At length, some one recollects, that on the upper story of the same hotel, immediately beneath the tiles of the roof, there lives some poor man, some young scholar, and it is suggested that, of course, he must have a crucifix. Then they hasten to make known their wants, and there they find a cross; and this poor man, or this scholar, lends it to the dying rich man, who at least is presented in his agony with that image which is designed to console those who in their lives have known the labours of men. When Cæsar fell, he had no object before him but the stern countenance of that great Pompey, whose dread form, carved in stone, as we yet behold it, can inspire only awe; but, in Christian ages, there were few places in which a man could die without having his last looks directed to some cross, the emblem of hope and mercy! The Maid of Orleans asked for a crucifix at her death, when every form of horror was accumulated. An Englishman broke a stick in two parts, and made a cross: the maid took it, kissed it, pressed it to her bosom, and mounted the pile. Mention has been made also of the death-taper. This alludes to the lighting that blessed candle which seems so odious to the children of this world, but so full of joy to the just: it signified the light of faith and the lucid mansions, and it was used to dispel the fears of the departing soul. The body itself, when it lay without a name, seemed to partake of the new and blessed form of death. The temperate and austere discipline of Catholics was favourable to the delicate susceptibility of noble natures; for to them it is an agreeable thought, that the body should not become a rich feast for disgustful worms, and a vast receptable for pestiferous

exhalations. The spectacle of a rich epicure within his shroud, or of one of these modern philosophers with whom he who dines best to the last makes the best end, would be almost enough to induce such men to fly to a monastery, where death would be stripped even of what seemed horrible to the senses, and where even the body would seem to participate in the soul's purity. In bequeathing his body to the earth, the man of temperate and austere habits might generally say, with the old poet of France, "Les vers n'y trouveront grand graisse."

Speaking of the beautiful appearance of the body of Dom Basile after death, the father abbot of La Trappe says, "It is true that it is one of the privileges of the servants of Jesus Christ, as the Holy Ghost teaches us, not to know either the deformity, or the horror, or the necessity of death. Non tanget illos tormentum mortis; visi sunt oculis insipientium mori*". Describing the convent of the Carmelites at Nicopie, in Cyprus, brother Nicole, the pilgrim, relates "that it was founded by French noblemen, and that there rests there the body of John de Montfort, tres tout entier, et est le plus beau mort quonques fut veu dessus la terre."

Again, allusion is often made to the custom which became pretty general, of laymen assuming a religious habit at their death. Thus, in the Saxon Chronicle, we read, "In the year 1056, died Earl Odda, whose body lies at Pershore, and who was admitted a monk before his end: a good man and virtuous, and truly noble†." Milton is pleased to be very facetious on this subject,—speaking of those

> —— "Who, to be sure of Paradise,
> Dying, put on the weeds of Dominic,
> Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised."

But, not to observe what a remarkable testimony was here furnished to the celestial virtues which were recognized in the members of these holy and blessed orders, it is well known to all who are correctly taught in Chronic lore, that this was a practice observed by men of saintly lives, and that it did imply a voluntary renunciation of

* Relations de la Mort, &c. Tom. I. 192.
† 247.

the world, not only because men naturally cling to the most unsubstantial image at their death, and cherish remembrances of the dignities and titles of the profession in which they had previously lived, but also because by this act they were, in the event of their recovery, bound to continue in the observance of that religious life which they had embraced in their sickness; for those who, under such circumstances, had received the monastic habit, and who were styled "monachi ad succurrendum," had not liberty to return to the world on their recovery. This being known to every one, the act was certainly less indicative of a superstitious veneration than of a conversion of the heart to God. In Spain, such men were entitled confessors, as Ducange proves in his Glossary. A memorable instance of the scrupulous exactness with which this discipline was observed, is furnished in the history of Spain. Wamba, king of the Visigoths had drunk poison. When the bishops and the chieftains beheld him lying senseless, immediately they administered to him the order of confession and penitence; or, in other words, they gave him the monastic habit; and when this holy king had recovered from the effect of the poison, understanding that orders had been imposed upon him, he retired to a monastery, and there, as long as he lived, he remained in religion. This is the account given by Alfonso, Bishop of Salamanca; but the passage is explained by ancient Spanish writers, who say that the king at the time had expressly demanded the habit of religion*. Many princes became monks ad succurrendum. Thus Lothaire, son of Louis-le-Debonnaire, was made a monk in sickness at Prumia, and soon after died. The Fratres ad succurrendum were inscribed on the boards of the monastery, as persons partaking of the suffrages. Thus, John Commenæus, Emperor of the Greeks, has a place in the Necrology of the Abbey of St. Martin apud Laudunum. The words are, "XV. Kal. Maii commemoratio Joannis Imperatoris hujus ecclesiæ Fratris ad succurrendum†."

With respect to the moral characteristics of death in the ages of faith, many peculiarities must have excited attention in the preceding series of examples.

* Mabillon Præfat. in IV. Sæcul. Benedict. § cap. 7.

† Id. Præfat. in III. Sæcul. § 1.

In the first place, what repeated allusions are made to the foreknowledge of death, and to its announcement in a supernatural manner! St. Francis Xavier told a certain merchant named Veglio, who was a holy man, that when the wine in his glass should taste bitter, it would be a signal to him to prepare for death. The event fulfilled the prediction *. In many ancient church windows, as well as on the hangings in the choir of Westminster Abbey, was represented the story of the forewarning of death, made to king Edward the Confessor, by some pilgrims, who came to him from Jerusalem and gave him a ring which he had before secretly given to a poor man that asked his charity in the name of God and of St. John the Evangelist, for it is said that he never refused any man who asked alms in the name of St. John, and he had nothing to give at that moment but the ring from his finger. Machiavel relates, "that the Duke of Milan had a strong presentiment of his death; for on the morning of St Stephen's day when he was assassinated, after putting on his cuirass to proceed in solemn state to the church of St. Stephen, he took it off again, and said that he would hear mass that day in the castle chapel, and hearing that his almoner was already departed for St. Stephen's with all the ornaments of his chapel, he desired that the Bishop of Como might supply his place; but as the Bishop was unable to do so, he was obliged to proceed to the church where his murderers were waiting for him †."

Hugo Flaviniacensis, in the chronicle of Verdun, relates, that Odilia, the daughter of Count Herimann, being told that she was to die on the following day, by Richard Abbot of St. Vito, prepared herself accordingly, and expired suddenly on the morrow while they were praying around her, and strange to hear, administering to her the sacred oil, though previously without illness. What remarkable instances, too, are recorded of men being apprized in a manner supernatural of the death of others at a distance!

St. Gregory of Tours relates, "that the blessed Severinus, Bishop of Cologne, on a Sunday morning after matins, going about as usual with his clerks, heard

* Bonhours Vie de S. S. F. X. II. 178.
† Hist. of Florence, Lib. VII.

a chorus of angels in the sky, and he knew that it arose from the fact, that the soul of St. Martin was at that moment departing, and so the event proved*." Now it is true, that St. Gregory of Tours has collected many reports, to some of which it is difficult to give perfect credence; but what shall we say of the fact of St. Ambrose, while celebrating mass at Milan, having been miraculously made acquainted with St. Martin's death at Tours? St. Hugo, the sixth abbot of Cluny, and St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, died both on the same night, and a holy monk had a vision at the time announcing their death†. The venerable Bede has another most remarkable instance. "The same night in which St. Hilda died in her monastery at Whitby, it pleased the Almighty, by a manifest vision, to make known her death in a distant monastery, which is called Hakenes. There was in this house, a certain nun named Begu, who had served our Lord in a monastic conversation upwards of thirty years. She being then at rest in the dormitory of the sisters, heard on a sudden, in the air, the accustomed sound of the bell, which used to awaken and call them to prayers when any one of their community was taken out of this world; upon which opening, as she imagined, her eyes, she saw the top of the house uncovered, and a light from above filling all the place: which, when she had attentively considered, she saw in that same light the soul of the said servant of God going up to heaven, attended and conducted by angels; upon which, immediately rising in terror, she ran to the nun who then presided in the monastery in place of the Abbess Frigyth, and with many tears and sighs, told her that the Abbess Hilda, the mother of them all, was departed this life, and had ascended in her sight, encircled with an immense light, to the mansion of light eternal, and to the happy society of the citizens of heaven. The other hearing this, called up all the sisters, and assembling them in the church, admonished them to pray and sing psalms for the soul of their mother, which having performed during the remainder of the night, they were informed by the brethren who came there in the morning from Whitby, that she had departed from this world at the same hour in which the vision was seen. This is the account given

* Mirac. cap. 4. 5. † Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 438.

by Bede. One might multiply these examples, and relate how, in the year 660, on the sixteenth of January, St. Furcy departed this life, in the village called Massiere, in Picardy, and the same hour appeared to Count Haymond, in sacerdotal vestments, attended by a deacon and subdeacon, with a lighted taper in his hand, saying, "that according to his promise he was come to wish him farewell before leaving the world;" but as accounts of this kind are familiar to every one, it is of more importance to call the attention to those memorable records of predicted, or rather of demanded death, which are found in the most authentic histories.

In 1312, Ferdinand IV., King of Spain, was summoned to appear before the tribunal of Christ, within thirty days, by the two brothers, Peter and John, of the order of Caravalla, who were unjustly condemned to death upon the charge of having murdered Benavidius during the siege of Alcaodela, which was then in the hands of the Moors. Upon the thirtieth day, which was the seventh of the Ides of September, he was found dead in his bed, to which he had retired in perfect health, so that among the Kings of Castille, he received the name of Ferdinandus in jus vocatus*. Walter Burgensis, Bishop of Poitiers, unjustly accused and deposed by Pope Clement V., bore the injury with patience; but dying, for the sake of example to others, caused these words to be written on his tomb: "ad justum Dei judicium appello." Clement read the inscription, and did justice to his memory; but of his death, connected also with the summons of the Grand Master of the Templars, Drexelius declines to speak. Agrestius reviled and calumniated St. Columban after his death. Euslachius the Abbot, disciple of St. Columban, summoned the calumniator to appear before the tribunal of Christ within the year. Before the term was complete, Agrestius met with his death by the hands of his own slave†. Philip, King of France, solemnly cited to appear before the divine judgment within the year, by the Grand Master of the Templars, died on the twenty-ninth of November of that year. Francis Duke of Brittany, receiving back his brother Giles, who had been in England for his education, cast

* Mariana, Lib. XV. de reb. Hisp. c. 11.

† Surius, Mense Martio die 29.

him into prison upon a false charge of treason and put him to death. The innocent youth cited his brother to appear with him before the tribunal of God within the year; Francis died of the dropsy before the term expired*. Nantinus, Count of Angouleme, cited to judgment before God, by Heraclius the Bishop, expired, crying out that he was summoned by the priest, and that he acknowledged his crimes†. Rodulph, Prince of Austria, unjustly condemning to death a certain knight, who was enclosed in a sack and thrown into the river, the knight, before his head was covered, beheld the duke at a window, and cried out with a loud voice, "Duke Rodulph, I summon you to the tremendous tribunal of Christ, that you may give an account for putting me to death unjustly," he said, and was pressed down, and he disappeared in the waters. The duke laughed at the threat, but before the end of the year he was seized with a fever, which he acknowledged to be the stroke of Heaven calling him to judgment, and he died in horrors ‡.

> "Oh! how severe God's judgment, that deals out
> Such blows in stormy vengeance———§."

In Ireland Patrick O'Kelly, a bishop, and Conatius Ornarius, a Franciscan friar of noble birth, cast into a dark dungeon by the viceroy, for refusing to acknowledge the queen as head of the church, afterwards cruelly tortured and led to execution, spoke to the people for half an hour, and then turning to the viceroy, cited him to appear before the divine tribunal. They were put to death, and the viceroy proceeded to Limerick, where he fell sick and died on the fourteenth day after receiving this summons||. The master of the Teutonic order maliciously condemned to death a young man, against whom he had a private enmity. The youth, on his way to execution protesting his innocence, appealed to the Supreme Arbiter of life and death, and cited his judge to appear within thirteen days. Truly, God despiseth not the sup-

* Æneas Sylvius, Hist. Europæ, cap. 43.
† Greg. Turonens. Lib. V. Hist. Franc. c. 36.
‡ Drexelius Tribunal Christi, Lib. II. cap. 3.
§ Dante Hell, XXIV.
|| Florimundus Redmundus de ortu hæres. cap. 20.

plication of the poor, his eyes are upon the just, and his ears open to their prayers. The youth was executed, and on the thirteenth day, the Teutonic master was struck with sudden death. This happened at Riga in Livonia, in the year 1407, as Albertus Krantzius relates *. In the year 1052, the Abbot Herveld was unjustly treated and oppressed by Burchard, Bishop of Halberstad. In vain he defended his cause before the tribunals. On his death-bed he sent for Frederic Count Palatine, and desired him to bear this message to the bishop, "that he was dying without redress, having been too weak to gain justice, but that he appealed to God, and that they should both appear before his judgment seat within a few days." The abbot died, and in the course of a few days, as the bishop was mounting his horse, he was seized with a sudden illness, which left him only time to confess that he was hurried away to answer before the divine tribunal, and there to be judged †. The abbot of the monastery of St. James at Leodium, being attacked by the governor and condemned by the bishop on account of his refusing to give up a certain young nobleman who wished to remain in the monastery, finding that he could gain no justice on earth, appealed to the heavenly court, and cited his unjust judge to appear there along with him before forty days. On the fortieth day, about the hour of nones, the abbot died. At the same moment the governor was in a bath, and hearing the convent bell toll for the dead, he asked what it meant, and being informed that the abbot of St. James had just died suddenly, he who had never forgotten to keep account of the days from the summons given, was seized with terror and astonishment, rising hastily and crying out, "Alas! I must appear this day before the Supreme Judge!" and hardly had he touched the door when he sunk down, and with a dreadful groan expired ‡. Otho, the Roman Emperor, being reproved by his son William, the Bishop of Mayence, for his marriage with Adelaide, cast him into prison. The bishop summoned Otho to appear along with him upon the day of Pentecost, before the tribunal of Christ; on that very day, Otho being in Saxony, was

* Lib. XIII. Vandaliæ, cap. 2.

† Lambertus Schaffnaburg. Annal. apud Baron. Tom. II.

‡ Thom. Cantipr. Lib. II. de miraculis sui ævi, cap. 35.

struck with sudden death, and his son had ceased to live a short time before *. Baronius denies the truth of this last account, and Drexelius declines pronouncing between the two cardinals †.

These recitals are not without moral dignity. "History," says a great French writer, "is pleased with things grave and tragic." But they have led us far from the deaths of the just, to which we must now return. Another circumstance which must have struck us in the preceding narrations relative to their end is, the sudden and gentle manner in which the transition so frequently took place, from a state of perfect health to the long expected termination of the mortal course. So that the deaths of the holy and the unjust were so far often similar. Pelisson died suddenly, as if falling asleep, having the day before received the holy communion, a circumstance of which the protestants attempted to avail themselves, asserting that he refused or eluded receiving the sacraments of the church ‡. A holy priest of the diocese of Rouen, having begun to say mass, and repeating the words "introibo ad altare dei," suddenly dropped down and expired. Many have departed while announcing the word of God to the people. The Cardinal de Berulle died while saying mass at the moment of pronouncing the words of the canon, "hanc igitur oblationem." Birnstan, Bishop of Winchester, was a man of the most pure sanctity; every day he used to sing a mass of requiem for the dead, and at night he used fearlessly to walk about alone, repeating the psalms for the salvation of their souls, and of him it is said, that on one occasion, when he had finished the office with the prayer that they might rest in peace, a voice of a great multitude, as if of the dead out of their sepulchres, seemed to respond amen. He used to wash the feet of the poor every day, and give them food, and would then remain alone in prayer. One day being thus employed, without any previous sickness, his spirit departed. His disciples thought him still at his prayers, and suffered a whole day to pass, but on the following morning very early, they broke in and found him dead. The citizens, because of his sudden

* Petrus Damianus, Tom. I. Epist. Lib. II. 15.
† Tribunal Christi, Lib. II. cap. 3.
‡ Hist. de Louis XIV. par De Larrey, an. 1693.

death, seemed to have forgotten his memory, not knowing that "non potest male mori qui bene vixerit *." Notwithstanding the inference of the people here, this was a maxim well and generally understood during the middle ages. St. Anselm, or some writer of the same age, whose work has been mistaken for that of the Father of the Scholastic Theology, speaks expressly on the question: "Is it an injury to a good man if he be slain or carried off by a sudden death? By no means," is the reply, "For they do not die a sudden death who always remember that they are to die; therefore, whether by the sword or by wild beast, or by flames or waters, or wheels and torture, or by whatever other mode they die, "Semper pretiosa est in conspectu Domini mors Sanctorum ejus.' "

Is it of any service to the wicked if they lie for a long time on their beds before death? none whatever; for by whatever death they die, they die an evil and a sudden death who die not in the Lord, and who used never to remember that they were to die †. Again, have we not remarked with how little fear these just and most humble men contemplated the approach of death? St. Ambrose said when he was dying, "that he had so lived, that he had no sorrow for having lived, and that he did not fear death, knowing that he was in the hands of a good Master. William of Malmesbury says, "that St. Wistan was of such simplicity, that he had not the least fear of his agony and death. "It was," he says, "simplicitas nescia de Dei diffidere misericordia ‡." In monasteries, and in them the spirit of the ages of faith is still preserved, there is nothing more striking to a stranger than the tone and looks of the holy religious when they advert to death. When I was lodged in the great monastery of Camaldoli, on the Apennines, one of the aged fathers used always to be carried into the church in a chair. One morning, after a night of dreadful tempest, with thunder and torrents of rain, I was informed by one of the monks, soon after mass, that this Father Francis, whom I had seen that morning as usual in the church, had been attacked with great illness in consequence of the first coming on of the cold of September. "He feels

* Wil. Malmesbur. de Gestis Pontif. Anglor. Lib. II.
† S. Anselmi Elucidarii Lib. II. cap. 31.
‡ De Gestis Pontif. Angl. Lib. IV.

now a little better," said this monk, but, added he, with a smile that cannot be described by words, so full was it of sweet religious hope and constancy, "he is about to set out on his voyage—the voyage, I mean to eternity." It is in these holy communities that one may listen with delight and astonishment to the thoughts of faith expressed often in the language of the Phædo. "I should wish to convince you," will the monk or friar say to us, "that a man who has spent his life in the study of philosophy ought to take courage at his death, and to be full of hope, that he is about to possess the greatest good that can be obtained, which will be in his possession as soon as he dies. Truly it would be ridiculous if, after teaching such lessons all our lives, the moment when death approached, we should grow angry at the thought of meeting what we formerly praised and made the object of our desire. It would be laughable to see a man who had held, that death was only a deliverance from the chains of the body, who after preparing himself for it during his life, should afterwards, when death did arrive, grow indignant at it. Would it not be supremely ridiculous? Certainly it would *." Religion supplied nearly the same words to Montmorency at his death: "Ah, Father," said he to the priest who came to console him, "it would be disgraceful, after knowing how to live during more than eighty years, not to know how to die during a quarter of an hour." Everywhere, indeed, there was deep humility and an exclusive reliance on mercy; but every where also we observe the same confidence, the same sweet exalted hope, enabling persons naturally the most scrupulous, susceptible, weak, and timid, to go down to the grave, having, with Adamantine force of soul, this belief that they would be happy in a life to come. Socrates could only advise men, *ἀδαμαντίνως δεῖ δὴ ταύτην τὴν δόξαν ἔχοντα, εἰς ᾅδου ἰέναι* †. whereas, in many cases, the humblest minister of religion in the ages of faith, could not only counsel, but also enable them to do so. Continued mention was also made of those sweet impressive and tranquil discourses, which were held by these holy men before death, which would have seemed so admirable to the ancient poets, who were

* Plato Phædo, 68. † Plato de Repub. Lib. X.

fond of converting to dramatic use the novissima verba; and the almost constancy of this phenomena in members of the city of God, at some period previous to their change, would have led Aretæus to abandon his distinction of peculiar maladies in attributing prophetic power to men arrived near the last scene of life. Celebrated with the ancients was the dying chant of the swan, the opinion of which Plato applies in a most splendid passage, to illustrate the happiness of the future world; though naturalists like Ælian, might shock the poetic imagination, by affirming that neither they nor perhaps any one else had ever heard a swan sing *. But to affirm, that the unwonted vivacity of thought and solemnity of feeling of these saintly men when about to leave our world, were like an announcement of their departure with harmonious sounds, and as it were, with sweetest music before they took their flight to heaven, and set out for a happier land, would expose no one to the danger of contradiction, or of being supposed subject to the delusions of their fancy. Socrates discoursing a short time before his death, remarked to his friends, "how proper it was for a person who was about to leave the world, to investigate and to mythologize concerning that passage, as to what we can suppose it to be †." In the ages of faith indeed we do not find dying men engaged in any inquiry or investigation respecting the nature or consequences of death; but like St. Cuthbert dying, they spoke a few but strong words concerning peace and humility. They conversed on the necessity of death for all men, and on the certain truths respecting the future state to which it would introduce them; they spoke with hope of their passing to God and to the company of his saints, with whom it was far better to be than with imperfect men on earth, and these last accents of the mourning dove, must have impressed every one with the conviction that they would soon be comforted amidst the ineffable and eternal joys of the heavenly Jerusalem. When St. Sturm was dying the monks begged that when he was with God he would pray for them: he replied, "Prove yourselves worthy, and be so conducted in your lives that I may justly pray for you, and then I would do what you desire." The examples which we

* Ælian. Var. Hist. I. 14. † Plato Phædo, 61.

gave of dying scenes from the histories of the ages of faith might be multiplied without end, and we should find them all characterized by the same astonishing mixture of quiet and sublimity. To conceive them fully, no doubt one ought to have been present; but even after reading the description which is given of them in the simple unstudied language of the middle ages, is it possible to avoid feeling the deepest emotion? Methinks that every one who has attended to them will fancy that he hears a revelation of his own feelings in the account which the friend of Socrates gives of himself, after witnessing that sage's death: "Indeed I experienced impressions that were astonishing while present there; for I felt no compassion on being about to behold the death of a man who was dear to me; for O Echecrates, that man seemed to me to be happy, as I judged from his manner and from his words, so sweetly and so generously did he die; and I felt assured that he did not depart to Hades without a divine destiny, but that arriving there, he would be happy, if ever any one at any time enjoyed happiness. On that account, therefore, I felt no compassion, such as might have been called for from persons who were present at grief; nor, on the other hand, did I feel that pleasure which we were accustomed to experience during our conversation on philosophy, though we then conversed as usual; but without premeditation or art, I suffered a kind of strange impression, an unusual mixture composed both of pleasure and pain, when I reflected that he was to die almost immediately; and all of us who were present experienced nearly the same feelings; at one time weeping, and at another laughing, and one of us, Apollodorus, did nothing but smile *." Now let the moderns be pleased to take note, that this passage, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the sublimest monuments of antiquity, would pass, if it were not for the occasional expression of doubt, almost unnoticed in those thousand chronicles which were composed by monks during, what they term, the dark and barbarous ages.

With respect to the last consolation which religion afforded to the dying, of which mention is so expressly made in the preceding examples, it is not necessary to

* Plato Phædo.

enter into any detail. Every one knows that the Church has always desired, as St. Augustin says, alluding to the sacrament of reconciliation, "that none of her children should depart from this life without the pledge of her peace*!" Extreme unction, or, as it was called in the middle ages, sacred unction, for the former term is not found in any author before the twelfth century†, was received, as we have seen, generally in the Church, for it was administered to persons who still had sufficient strength to receive it kneeling. The popular custom of wishing to defer it to the last moments arose from a superstition originating in England, and thence spreading into France, which made the people suppose that, after having received it, it was not lawful, in the event of recovery, to walk, excepting barefoot, or to make use of marriage. Several provincial councils were obliged to denounce this superstition, as tending to deprive the faithful of the remedy provided for them by the Church. This sacramental rite had always been administered uninterruptedly, both in the Latin and Greek churches, from the time of the Apostles. Though it is not expressly treated of by many of the early fathers, because it was never attacked by heretics, it is, however, mentioned by Origen, St. John Chrysostom, St. Innocent I., St. Cæsarius of Arles, St. Gregory the Great, and by Venerable Bede, who affirms it to be practised by the Church in conformity to apostolic usage. In the middle ages, it was the custom for many priests to be present at the administration of this sacrament; but, after the thirteenth century, in the Latin Church, this usage gave place to the present discipline, though the faithful were still recommended to invite for this purpose as many ecclesiastics as could conveniently attend. In connection with the assistance afforded to the dying, we should particularly remark the sincerity and courage with which, whatever might be the circumstances of their condition, they were always warned of their danger. Behold Louis XI. fortified, walled in, encaged, as it were, in his castle of Plessis. Neither his son nor those charged with his domestic service could penetrate to him. One could only enter his chamber by means of a staircase, cut in

* Lib. I. de Adult. Conjug. cap. xxviii.

† Mabillon de Stud. Monast. Pars II. c. xiii.

the centre of a thick wall; yet there did the Church supply him with a voice of severe and frank warning. His death was announced to him as abruptly, as plainly, as if he had been a poor peasant—"Sire, pensez à votre conscience; il est faict de vous; il n'y a nul remède." When the martial King, Edward the Third, was lying on his bed at the point of death, forsaken, and even plundered by his former favourites, one of whom took the ring from his finger, amongst so many there was only present at that time a certain priest, other of his servants applying the spoil of what they could lay hands on, who, lamenting the king's misery, and inwardly touched with grief of heart, that among so many counsellors there was none that would minister unto him the word of life, came boldly unto him, and admonished him to lift up the eyes, as well of his body as of his heart, unto God, and with sighs, to ask mercy of Him whose majesty he well knew he had grievously offended. Whereupon the king listened to the words of the priest; and, although a little before he had wanted the use of his tongue, yet then, taking strength, he seemed to speak what was in his mind; and then, what for weakness of his body, contrition of his heart, and sobbing for his sins, his voice and speech failed him, and scarce half pronouncing the word Jesu, he gave up the ghost at his manor of Sheene. Meschinot, who always lived with Princes, being personally attached to the dukes of Brittany, takes care to remind them of death in bold and simple language—

> "Princes, vous n'estes d'autre alloi
> Que le pauvre peuple commun.
> Faites-vous sujets à la loi,
> Car certes vous mourrez comme un
> Des plus petits*."

From admonitions of the same frankness, the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries were not exempt, as the following instance will show. John de la Moote, the thirty-first abbot of St. Albans, in the reign of King Richard II., being at Tytenhangre, was suddenly attacked with a fatal pleurisy after mass on All-Saints. The monks of the abbey hastened to his assistance. William Wynteshal, his con-

* Gouget Bibliotheq. Français, Tom. IX. 412.

fessor, arrived there at three in the morning, and addressed him in these words: "The physicians have certain signs of your approaching death, and that you will soon be deprived both of reason and memory; therefore, I require you to attend to the salvation of your soul while any vigour remains; then and next, make restitution if you have defrauded any body; and lastly, signify your will and pleasure in matters depending between you and our brethren." These instances are worthy of remark, if it were only to show the contrast between the spirit of the middle ages and of our own time. One of the most admired philosophical writers of the day, showing that politeness depends upon the philosophy of mind, observes, that the benevolent poor, who tend the sick with such assiduity, have yet little foresight of the mere pains of thought; and, while in the same situation, the rich and better educated, with equal, or perhaps even with less benevolence of intention, carefully avoid the introduction of any subject which might suggest, indirectly to the sufferer, the melancholy images of parting life, the conversation of the poor, around the bed of their sick friend, is such as can scarcely fail to present to him every moment, not the probability merely, but almost the certainty of approaching death. "It is impossible," he continues, "to be present in these two situations without remarking the benefit of a little knowledge of the human mind, without which, far from fulfilling its real wishes, benevolence itself may be the most cruel of torturers*." I do not propose that this curious passage should be viewed in connection with those sentences of the Phædo, which have been noticed during the course of the present chapter, for a comparison between the modern and ancient philosophy belongs not to our subject; but it is impossible, after hearing the sentiments of men in the ages of faith respecting death, and after witnessing their last moments, not to be struck with amaze at the change which must have taken place in the general disposition of men's minds before a book containing such a passage as that which I have now quoted could have been deemed, by consent of the learned, worthy of a distinguished place among the works of philosophy.

* Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. I. p. 68.

But to return from this digression. It is well known what care was taken that every Christian, sick or dying, at peace with God, should have the consolation and support of receiving the food of angels, the adorable body of Jesus Christ. In the darkest and most tempestuous nights, amidst forests and marshy wastes, the sound of a bell, and the light of a lantern, would announce the passage of a priest with his clerk*, repairing to the hermit's cell, or to the woodman's hut; and then the poor shepherds would hasten to adore their Saviour, and even the robber from the wood would follow at a distance, drawn and fascinated, as it were, by the mysterious attraction of that faith which he had practically renounced, without having ever been entirely able to expel it from his heart. The zeal and charity with which the dying were assisted during the middle ages tended not a little to impress a new character upon scenes of death. It is recorded of St. Osmond, Bishop of Salisbury, in the eleventh century, that he used to assist criminals at their execution, and would accompany them himself to the scaffold. The Church, in some places, had to remonstrate with the civil power, and in council, at Lambeth, at London, and at Vienne, formally to condemn the barbarous enactments which attempted to deprive criminals, doomed to death, of the sacrament of penance. Many kings, however, confirmed her decisions by humane laws, as Ethelred, Edward, and Canute, in England, and Charles VI. of France. Many confraternities were established, in which even the laity devoted themselves to the pious office of comforting the sick. Spenser, describing a holy hospital, alludes to such persons—

> "Another had charge sick persons to attend,
> And comfort those in point of death which lay;
> For them most needed comfort in the end,
> When sin, and hell, and death, doe most dismay
> The feeble soule, departing hence away.
> All is but lost that living we bestow,
> If not well ended at our dying day."

Poor people, with their dying words, would desire that their chamber, and the way by which the adorable sacrament was to pass, the way before Jesus, the King of

* Statut. Synod. of Troyes de Sacramentis, 8.

Glory, the God of men and of angels, the God of heaven and earth, the God of time and of eternity, should be strewed with flowers; and to honour the approach of the same mighty Lord, the apartments of the rich would be adorned with whatever in their possession was the most beautiful and precious. To tender and passionate souls, this hour, when he came to give himself to them, as their viaticum, was the hour long desired and ardently expected—it was the hour of love and of seraphic ecstacy. Nothing then remained but to press the image of Jesus to the bosom, and to wait in silence for the change. This last scene of the solemn act was closed by the Church's holy prayers, which winged the faint soul to mount to heaven, bidding it go forth from this world in the name of God the Father Almighty who created it, in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, who suffered for it, in the name of the Holy Spirit, which had been imparted to it: in the name of angels and archangels, in the name of thrones and dominations, in the name of principalities and powers, in the name of cherubim and seraphim, in the name of patriarchs and prophets, in the name of holy apostles and evangelists, in the name of holy martyrs and confessors, in the name of holy monks and hermits, in the name of holy virgins and all the saints of God, that its rest that day might be in peace, and its habitation in holy Sion.

This assistance at death was connected also with many remarkable narratives, which, I believe, would have excited the envy of Cicero, if he could have heard them after composing his Tusculan disputations; for who can doubt but that he would have rejoiced to have been able to adorn his page with such an account as that relating to the bishop in Scotland, who, when travelling alone on horseback among the Highlands, was forced, by a sudden and violent snow-storm, to seek shelter in a poor cottage by the way-side, where he was told that the father of the family was lying in an inner room dangerously ill. Ever attentive to the object of his holy mission, the good bishop desired to see him; and, on being admitted, proceeded to admonish the poor man of his danger; but he replied, that he felt assured of his recovery. As the bishop, however, persisted in showing him the groundlessness of his confidence, and in exhorting him to prepare for death, he confessed the secret cause

which made him feel so secure, saying that he was a Catholic, and that during the last thirty years of his life, ever since he had first come into that desolate region, he had prayed to God not to take him from the world without enabling him to receive the last sacraments of holy Church. Pierced to the heart with reverential awe, the saintly bishop told him, that he who stood over him was a priest and a bishop, that he had with him the holy oils and the precious body of our Lord. "Then God has heard my prayer," cried the dying man, "and now may he let his servant depart in peace." The bishop administered to him the holy and adorable mysteries of the Church, and before he withdrew the soul was gone to behold its Judge. Equally interesting is the account given of a priest who was hastening on his errand of blessed charity, one dark and stormy night, through some of the most obscure lanes in London, to bear assistance to some poor dying person in that neighbourhood. As he passed, suddenly the ground gave from under his feet, and he was precipitated through one of those cellar entrances which in some quarters of the capital are so frequently to be found adjacent to the wall. Recovering from the first shock, a deep moan, proceeding as if from the farthest end of this sombre vault, engaged all his attention. "In God's name who are you, and where am I fallen?" asked the priest. "I know you," replied a feeble voice; "you are a priest of the holy Church, come to console me at my death." A child now came up to him, whom the priest, with entreaties and charges of authority, prevailed upon to ascend into the street, in order to procure a light. But the narrative is soon concluded: this poor dying person received from the priest's hands the last consolations of religion, and then expired in his arms.

We have seen the consolations administered to the dying, but what was the condition of the surviving friends after the departure of him whom they loved, and what was the character of their mourning? Let the answer be sought in the writings of the ages of faith. In the first place, they were desired to make use of the assistance of reason and natural wisdom, as far as it was in the order of Providence that it should console them. To this St. Basil appeals in writing to the widow of Arintheus, saying, "He was a man, and he is dead, like

Adam, like Abel, like Noah, like Abraham, like Moses, like all that has ever been great among men." It is the same spirit which dictates that striking reply in Shakspeare, on hearing that the Lady Macbeth is dead—

> "She should have died hereafter.
> There would have been a time for such a word."

but to these considerations of natural wisdom were added the supernatural consolations of faith, which reminded men not only of the necessity, but of the happiness of dying. "How many times," says St. Cyprian, "my dearest brethren, hath God deigned to charge me openly,—me, humble and weak creature, to announce to you in my sermons, that we ought not to weep for those of our brethren whom the Lord has delivered from the world, since we know well that they are not lost, but only sent before us; and that, in their departing, they only precede us like travellers, and those who make voyages on the sea; that we ought to regret them, but not to lament them with cries; that we ought not to clothe ourselves with garments of mourning, when they have assumed in heaven the bright white robe; that we ought not to give the Gentiles an occasion to reproach us for weeping on account of those who we say live with God, as if they were for ever plunged in the abyss of annihilation. We betray our hope and our faith*." Hear again how St. Basil writes to a mourning father:—"As the Lord hath established us to be, as it were, a second father to all Christians, we have regarded, as personal to ourselves, the affliction which you have experienced in the death of your blessed son. Upon hearing the deplorable details, we were at first moved, after the manner of men; but upon recollection, and as soon as we had considered this event with the eyes of faith, we asked pardon of God for having suffered our soul to be carried away by the force of passions; and we encouraged ourselves to endure what the ancient sentence of our God hath made the destiny of all mankind. If the life of this young man has not been of long duration here below, every one who reflects for a moment must conclude that this has been one of the greatest favours of heaven towards him. A longer abode

* On the Necessity of Dying.

upon earth is only a longer subjection to all kinds of evils. He has not known crime; he has never injured his neighbour; he has never been drawn on by unhappy circumstances to mix in the society of the wicked; he has lived exempt from lying, from ingratitude, from avarice, from voluptuous passions, from the vices of the flesh, and from the many other miserable productions of human depravity. His pure and spotless soul has retired from the world to rise to a happier region."

Such is the language of consolation that we find invariably addressed to mourners during the middle ages, and such the sentiments which they themselves expressed, as being their support and encouragement. "Length of time," says Egburg, in a letter to the holy Abbot Winfred, respecting the death of his brother—"length of time will turn my present sorrow into gladness, for it is written, 'Amor hominis adducit dolorem: amor autem Christi illuminat cor*.'" Faithful in respect to historical similitude is the description which Tasso gives of the mourning of the Crusaders on the death of Dudon—

"His wailing friends adorn'd the mournful bier
With woeful pomp, whereon his corpse they laid;
And when they saw the Bulloigne prince draw near,
All felt new grief, and each new sorrow made;
But he, withouten show or change of cheer,
His springing tears within their fountains staid;
His rueful looks upon the corse he cast
Awhile, and thus bespake the same at last:
We need not mourn for thee, here laid to rest,
Earth is thy bed, and not thy grave; the skies
Are for thy soul, the cradle and the nest,
There live, for here thy glory never dies;
For like a Christian knight and champion blest,
Thou did'st both live and die†."

But let us now return to the immediate scene of mourning, to cast one look upon the sheeted dead, and to inquire what duties remain to be accomplished with regard to the departed soul. Durandus says, "That, at the moment of death, the bell was tolled thrice to denote

* S. Bonifac. Mart. et Archiep. Epist. CI.
† Book III. c. 7.

the absolution which had been given to the penitent for the three modes of sin, by thought, word, and work*; and that for a clerk, the bells were tolled as many times as denoted the number of his orders†." It appears that in the time of St. Sturm, Abbot of Fulda, it was the custom to toll the bells for persons in their agony; for this holy man, at the point of death, ordered the brethren to run to the church, "et omnes gloggas pariter moveri imperavit," and desired that the assembled brethren might be entreated to pray for him. In England, however, the bell was tolled after death had taken place; for, as we have seen, Bede, after relating the death of St. Hilda, says, that Begu, a nun of another convent, heard the usual sound of the bell which used to summon them to prayer, "Cum quis de hoc sæculo fuisset evocatus" At Rheims, the lugubrious tolling of bells, doleful from the jarring of sounds on the death of men, used to be called l'Abbé mort, as if the agony of a dying person, l'Abboy de la mort, which shows that originally it was also tolled in the last moments of men‡.

With respect to the concluding labours employed in the concerns of the body, the excessive anxiety and pains of the ancients, on these occasions, were no longer required. With them, to wash and anoint the dead body was the only privilege they could bestow upon the dead §. When Agamemnon is slain, the chorus has only to ask—

τίς ὁ θάψων νιν; τίς ὁ θρηνήσων ||;

which would have been one of the last inquiries that in Christian ages would have been suggested by the death of a friend. Priam required ten days to prepare for the funeral of Hector ¶; and to describe all that was done on that occasion, would require the unwearied tongue of a Homer himself. But in the middle ages, the ceremonial connected with the body, which followed death, was greatly simplified and curtailed. No one in his last moments was led to fear, by the question of a Crito, that his

* Durandi Rationale, Lib. VII. c. 35.
† Id. Lib. I. c. 4.
‡ Mabillon Præfat. in III. Sæcul. Benedict. § vii.
§ Hom. Od.
|| Æschyl. Agam. 1546. ¶ Id. XXIV. 665.

faith was vain; and that he had but lost his time in labouring, with a view to the soul's immortality. St. Paul, the hermit, speaks to St. Anthony of his own burial in this style:—"Since the hour of my sleep is arrived, our Lord has sent you to cover this poor body with earth, or rather to commit earth to earth." So little importance seemed to be attached to the burial even of mighty kings, that strange scenes were sometimes presented, which might have been obviated if there had been greater previous solicitude, or an opinion more generally entertained of the importance of such rites. The salt carriers, who had the privilege of carrying the bodies of the kings of France to the grave, when conveying that of Charles VI. to St. Denis, laid it down in the middle of the way, demanding who was to pay them? Nothing is more common in the chronicles of the middle ages than to find mention of the express charge given by dying men, and even by great princes, like Philip, Count of Nemours, not only that no extraordinary pains or expense should be employed in their funerals, but even that their bodies should be committed to the ground with marks of indifference or ignominy. "All these things," says St. Augustin, "the care of a funeral, the kind of sepulture, the pomp of obsequies, are rather comforts for the living than helps for the dead. Many bodies of Christians are scattered naked on the earth; but Truth itself assures us, that men can do nothing further after they have killed the body. A crowd of servants swelled the magnificent convoy of Dives, whose obsequies seemed so splendid in the eyes of men, but much more beautiful in the sight of God was the ministry of angels which bore that poor Lazarus, not into a marble tomb, but into the bosom of Abraham*."—"Certain visions are related," says St. Augustin, "which seem to militate against this opinion; for the dead are said to have sometimes appeared to the living, who knew not where their bodies lay, and to have revealed the spot, in order that they might obtain burial. Were we to answer that these are falsehoods, we should seem to rise insolently against the writings of some of the faithful, and against the sense of those who affirm that such things have happened to themselves; but we may reply, that the living

* De Civitate Dei, Lib. I. 12. De Cura pro Mortuis.

also, without being conscious of it, appear often in dreams to the living; and, therefore, these visions of the dead cannot prove that the departed soul has really returned to instruct them. Such things, perhaps, may be done by angelic operation, without the knowledge of those whose bodies are unburied, by divine command, in order to console the living, or by these admonitions to recommend the humanity of sepulture to the human race, the neglect of which cannot injure the dead, but would argue impiety in the living. Why should we not credit these angelic operations by the dispensation of the Providence of God, exerted towards the good and the evil, according to the unsearchable depth of his judgment, whether the minds of mortals are thence instructed or deceived, consoled or terrified, according as mercy or punishment is due to each from Him whose mercy and judgment are not vainly commemorated by the Church*?" While, therefore, it was believed that this was a matter which did not interest the dead, there was no disposition in the Church to approve of any thing inhuman or extravagant with respect to the burial of the body. The Parthians used to give their dead to be devoured by birds and beasts. The rigid and inhuman sect of the stoics was indifferent, whether the body were to rot below or above ground. It was men like Lucretius and Lucian, who thought that nothing would remain after death, who chiefly ridiculed the care of the dead.

During the ages of faith, there was, in the minds of men, a deep and profound tenderness, an amiable and loving susceptibility, which admitted of nothing harsh or repulsive to the intimate feelings of our poor humanity. "Mary Magdalen," says St. John of the Cross, "deserved to be the first to behold Jesus Christ after his resurrection, because she remained the last by his sepulchre." "The bodies of the faithful," says St. Augustin, "are not to be despised and cast out, since they were the organs and vessels used by the Holy Spirit. Dear and venerable is a paternal vest or ring; and in like manner should we honour the body which was more joined and familiar to us than any garment which we wear, which served not as an external ornament or assistance, but which belonged to the very nature of man. Our Lord

* De Cura pro Mortuis.

commended the woman who had prepared ointments for his burial; and in the Gospel, he is commemorated with praise who diligently and reverently gave him sepulture*." For the same reason were they blessed by King David who buried the dry bones of Saul and Jonathan, because no one ever hated his own flesh, and what they wished to be done to themselves when deprived of sense, they did to others who were in that condition †.

The primitive Christians kept their dead exposed during three days, clothed in precious habits, and watched over them in prayer during the time. Then they carried them to the tomb, bearing lighted tapers, and singing hymns expressive of their hope of the resurrection. They buried with them either the ensignia of their dignity or the instruments of their martyrdom, or phials full of their blood, or the acts of their martyrdom, or crosses, or the book of the Gospel. The body was placed with the face regarding the East ‡.

St. Anthony, though alone in the desert, having brought out from the cell the dead body of St. Paul the Hermit, sung the hymns and psalms, according, as St. Jerome says, to the Christian tradition §. St. Jerome mentions the lights that were borne at the funeral of St. Paula, and notice of them occurs also in the account of that of St. Cyprien ||.

The form of monastic burial corresponded with the simplicity of the religious life. We read in the history of the church of Durham, that when any monk was dead there, he was dressed in his cowl and habit, and boots were put on his legs, and immediately he was carried to a chamber called the dead-man's chamber, where he remained till night. At night he was removed thence into St. Andrew's Chapel adjoining to the same chamber, and there the body remained till eight o'clock in the morning. The night before the funeral, two monks, either in kindred or kindness the nearest to him, were appointed by the prior to be especial mourners, sitting all night on their knees at the dead man's feet. Then were the children of the Ambrie sitting on their knees

* De Civit. Dei, Lib. I. 13. † De Cura pro Mortuis.
‡ Benedict. XIV. de Canonizatione Servorum Dei, Lib. I.
§ S. Hieronymi Vita S. Pauli Eremitæ.
|| Joan. Devoti Institut. Canon. Lib. II. lit. vii. § 1.

in stalls on either side of the corpse, appointed to read David's Psalter all night over incessantly, till eight in the morning, when the body was conveyed to the chapter-house, where the prior and the whole convent met it, and there did say their dirge and devotion; and then the dead corpse was carried by the monks into the centry-garth, where it was buried, and there was but one peal rung for him*.

Yet the renown of sanctity and the devotion of the people, often rendered the burial of the religious, scenes of astonishing interest. Neither the pomp of the funeral of kings nor the triumphs of the ancient conquerors, were more solemn than the convoy of the body of the humble St. Martin to the Monastery of Marmoutiers on the Loire, in the year 397. There were more than two thousand monks present who had been his disciples, besides a distinct choir of virgins and an innumerable multitude of devout people.

The body of the blessed St. Francis is placed in a vault under the Marble Chapel in the great Church at Assissi. It stands in an upright posture; but the vault having been shut up by Gregory IX. no one can enter to behold it. A small opening, however, is left, through which a person may look by the light of a lamp burning in it. In the convent of the poor Clares at Assissi, in a vault under the high altar, lies the body of St. Clare, with a lamp burning before the opening into it. This was an ancient custom, as may be collected from the mode of Episcopal burial in the thirteenth century, according to the description of the tomb of a bishop of Angers. "He was buried in the mitre in which he had been consecrated, his crosier was by his side, and on his breast was placed the chalice, and a lead paten, containing wine and bread, and in this instance, behind his head there was a kind of channel, in which was a lamp lighted with oil, so that when the sarcophagus was closed, the light of that burning lamp shone within upon the body through an opening†.

Camden and Weever relate that, at the suppression and

* The Ancient Rites and Monuments of the Monastical and Cathedral Church of Durham, p. 89.

† Guillelmi Majoris Episcopi Andegav. Gesta apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. X.

demolition of the abbeys in York, burning lamps were found in many tombs, the flame of which it was said could not be extinguished by wind or water.

This practice seems to have greatly struck the poetic imagination of the Minstrel, who has so grandly described the midnight opening of the grave of Michael Scott in Melrose Abbey.—

> " Lo, warrior! now the cross of red
> Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
> Within it burns a wondrous light,
> To chase the spirits that love the night."

These are the monk's words to Sir William of Delorain. And when the grave-stone had been raised, we read of the lamp within the tomb, that

> " No earthly flame blaz'd e'er so bright,
> It shone like Heaven's own blessed light,
> Show'd the monk's cowl, and visage pale,
> Danced on the dark-brow'd warrior's mail,
> And kiss'd his waving plume."

What follows is truly beautiful and solemn :—

> " Before their eyes the wizard lay,
> As if he had not been dead a day.
> His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
> He seem'd some seventy winters old;
> A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
> With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
> Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea,
> His left hand held his book of might;
> A silver cross was in his right;
> The lamp was placed beside his knee:
> High and majestic was his look,
> At which the fellest fiends had shook;
> And all unruffled was his face:
> They trusted his soul had gotten grace.
> And the priest pray'd fervently and loud:
> With eyes averted prayed he;
> He might not endure the sight to see
> Of the man he had lov'd so brotherly."

In the grave of Charles of Trier, grand master of the Teutonic knights, were deposited, by his express orders, the life and prophecies of St. Brigitte. This was that

just and great man, whose bitterest enemies could never charge him with a single fault *. The extraordinary respect shown to many bishops at their death, forms a remarkable feature in history. St. Hugh, of Lincoln, the Burgundian, was carried to his grave at Lincoln by three kings. When St. Medard, Bishop of Noyon, died, the king, Clotaire, was present, and he assisted afterwards in person to carry the body to Soissons. And, as Don Savedra remarks, the dead body of that brave prelate, Gilles d'Albornos, passed from Rome to Toledo on the shoulders of the nations, as well friends as enemies †.

We may learn the form of collegiate burial from the account which is given of the customs that used to be observed in the English College at Douai. "At the burial of any of our members, the whole community attended in a very solemn procession from the College Church to that of the parish, where high mass was sung. The corpse was carried by the schoolfellows and companions of the deceased; a priest was borne on the shoulders of his fellow priests; and a dozen or twenty scholars surrounded the bier with lighted flambeaux. At the head of the procession went the priest, deacon, and subdeacon, vested for mass, with acolyths, thurifers, and our own choir, in surplices. The students followed, two and two, in the order of the classes, wearing cassocks."

The Roman ritual prescribes, that at the funeral of young persons, the bells should not be tolled in a lugubrious manner, but that they should rather be rung, so as to produce a festive sound ‡. This holy pomp of burial did not depend upon the rank of the deceased. In every country, during the middle ages, as in Spain or Portugal at the present day, the funerals of a poor tradesman or mechanic were, in their external form and appearance, often more splendid than those of potent peers or wealthy gentlemen. Though many of them could not even afford a coffin, yet their biers would be surrounded by a blaze of light streaming from hundreds of wax torches, each as thick as a man's arm—for all working men, as we have formerly shown, had enrolled themselves in a

* Voigt, Geschichte Preussens, IV. 381.

† Christian Prince, II. 559. ‡ De Exequiis Parvulorum.

fraternity, and the expense on these occasions was always borne by the whole society *. In the case of poor persons who had no such assistance, the Roman ritual requires that the priests of the parish should furnish tapers at their own expense, that so venerable a rite may never be omitted through any unworthy regard to economy †.

The work of corporal mercy, which consisted in burying the dead, used to be performed, as in Italy at the present day, by noblemen and persons of the highest condition, who, through devotion, used to form confraternities for that purpose. Spenser describes this custom—

" Others had charge of them now being dead,
In seemely sort their corses to engrave,
And deck with dainty flowres their brydall bed,
That to their heavenly spouse both sweet and brave
They might appeare, when he their soules shall save,
The wondrous workmanship of God's own mould,
Whose face he made all beastes to fear, and gave
All in his hand, even dead we honour should ‡."

With respect to the funerals of great nobles and kings, in the middle ages, if there was often a more magnificent pageant attending them, the pomp was still always ecclesiastic, and almost monastical, never secular or military. The Burning Chapel, so called from the quantity of lights which were placed round the body previous to interment; the ceremonial of sprinkling it with holy water; the vigils and prayers; the attendance of the clergy of all orders, both regular and secular; corresponded with the character of men, so many of whom expired on sackcloth and ashes.

" King Charles V. of France, (says Christine de Pisan) was wondrously afflicted on the death of his queen; and although the virtue of constancy was greater in him than in most men, this departure caused him such grief, that never before or after did any event produce the same effect in him; for much they loved each other with great love. The king, who loved the body, thought of the soul by devout prayers, masses, vigils, and psalters, and great alms. The body was carried solemnly, according

* Letters to Osorius. † De Exequiis.
‡ Faery Queene, I. 10.

to the usage of kings and queens,—clothed, adorned, and crowned,—on a rich bed of cloth of gold, surmounted with a canopy; and thus it was conveyed in great procession to the Church of our Lady. Four hundred torches, each of six pounds of wax, burned there. Monks of all orders went before the body, and our princes walked after it, clothed in black *."

These sad pageants on the death of kings, were not without a high moral dignity, and a most salutary effect upon the minds of men. Poets discerned this, as when Martial d'Auvergne, in his Vigils, relates the death of Charles VII.; and, after describing the pomp of the funeral and the grief of all France, concludes thus:—

> " Ainsi le regard de ce monde
> Après qu'on a euë grand liesse
> Tousjours en pleurs et deuil redonde,
> Et la joye finit en tristesse †."

Weever, in the discourse prefixed to his great work, laments, in bitter terms, on grounds of social policy, the error and practice introduced after " the Reformation," which caused all the ceremonial rites of obsequies to be laid aside as a fruitless vanity; and he makes this remark, that although the manner of burial and the pomp of obsequies be rather comforts to the living than helps to the dead: and although all these ceremonies be despised by our parents on their death-beds, yet should they not be neglected by us their children or nearest of kindred, upon their interments."

As when the soul was departing, so also when the body was descending into the grave, the prayers of the Church employed the thoughts of the assistants. Unknown to the middle ages was that custom of the Athenians which has been revived in modern times by the infidels of France, of choosing some distinguished man of the city to pronounce a panegyric over the dead at their burial, ἔπαινον τὸν πρέποντα, as Thucydides styles it ‡. But instead of this vain parade of rhetoric,—

* Chap. L.
† Les Vigiles de la Mort du Roy Charles VII.
‡ Lib. II. 34.

" The mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead ;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal
For the departed spirit's weal."

The first Christians made a wail for their dead, as at the funeral of St. Stephen, of whom we read, " Fecerunt planctum magnum super eum *." Yet it became the custom, in a very early age of the Church, to suppress all public lamentations. St. Jerome testifies that at funerals it was usual to sing allelujah. In later times, however, it was found necessary to provide against a return to the ancient practice of the heathen mourners, —so prone are men at all times to succumb from the supernatural elevation of faith. The Pagan excessive wail for the dead was strictly forbidden by the canons, as may be seen in Burchard. " Nothing, (say they) should be sung but psalms and prayers for the soul, and kurie eleison." Among the interrogations on the visitation of a bishop in the tenth century, we read, " Whether any one has sung over a dead man in the night diabolic songs, or drank or eat, or seemed to rejoice at his death, or if dead bodies were kept with nocturnal vigils in any other place besides the church ?" By a synod in that century, the clergy are commanded to forbid such customs, and all laughter over the dead. " Laics, (say the canons) who observe funeral vigils, should do it with fear and trembling and reverence. No one there should presume to sing diabolic songs, or to dance, or make jests, which the Pagans learned to practise from the devil. For who does not perceive that it is diabolic, not only alien from the Christian religion, but even contrary to human nature, there to sing, rejoice, get drunk, and be dissolved in laughter, laying aside all piety and affection of charity, as if rejoicing at a brother's death, where grief and lamentation with weeping ought to resound for the loss of a dear brother. Therefore, such insane joy and pestiferous singing must be altogether prohibited on the authority of God. But if any one desires to sing, let him sing kurie eleison, otherwise let him keep silence."

When the moderns take notice of any particular abuse connected with religion existing in society at present,

* Acts viii. 2.

they confidently ascribe it to the spirit of the middle ages. But with a very little knowledge of history it is easy to discern the error of such an opinion. Religion, during the middle ages, was engaged in an incessant struggle to abolish the corruptions which had existed before its arrival: and perhaps there is evidence to prove, that even in the tenth century there was a more delicate sense of what was, or was not, in unison with the spirit of Christianity and the mysteries of faith, and in consequence of the greater power of the Church to correct evils, a much more correct and effective discipline than can be found at present.

Reader! more lines I will not waste in setting forth the form of funeral rites—for other subjects so thicken upon us, that on this I cannot longer dwell. We have seen the dead man committed to the earth, with the ceremonies which were attached to his office and condition. "No more his bed he leaves ere the last angel-trumpet blow." We may conclude in the style of Homer—Thus did they bury the hero and the saint.

CHAPTER VIII.

Returning now from the sad spectacle of the natural side of death, let us see what the history of the middle ages records respecting the comfort which was reserved for these mourners in the great mysteries of our holy religion.

We have seen the character which death assumed during the ages of faith, attending the sufferer from sickness to the grave, where, on mere natural grounds, it would have been reasonable to suppose that all offices respecting him were terminated, and all the duties of the survivors fulfilled, whose lips his name, however once cherished and familiar, was never again to pass. Thus it was in the ancient world amidst the darkness and gloom of the night of heathenism, when, as Pliny says,

" men loved, or rather pretended to love, only the living, and did not even pretend to love any but those who were prosperous: for both the wretched and the dead were alike forgotten *." A man of extraordinary genius and renown like Cicero, indeed, might vainly flatter himself with the thought of the fame which awaited him, and say, in allusion to his death, " Longum illud tempus quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum." But this boast only rendered him obnoxious to the reproof which the same philosopher had passed upon others, saying, " Quoniam hæc plausibilia non sunt, ut in sinu gaudeant, gloriosè loqui desinant †." This was, in truth, a delusion too palpable to impart consolation to any heart. The fact was no less stubborn because sung in immortal verse by poets, that when any one died, all the benevolence of men, as Stesichorus said, perished.

θανόντος ἀνδρὸς πᾶσ' ὄλλυτ' ἀνθρώπων χάρις.

" Time will abate thy grief," says Alcestis, about to die, to her husband: " the dead are nothing:" or, as the later poet expressed it,

" When we die, we are only ashes and a shade ‡."

But were not those who still continued to divide time by calends in possession of some comfort after the death of friends? Yes, as the son of Nestor says, " This was the privilege of mourning mortals, to cut off the hair and to stain the cheek with tears §."

To persons at all conversant with Christian history, one need scarcely observe that the idea of death, in the mind of those who were its witnesses, had undergone a change no less complete than that which affected the sentiments of those who experienced it themselves. The moderns, indeed, seduced by the ravings of an ignorant fanaticism, and originally encouraged to attend to them by the artful policy of flagitious potentates, who thirsted for the plunder of property that had been consecrated to sacred purposes, were so unhappy as to renounce the

* Epist. Lib. IX. 9.
† Tuscul. III. 51.
‡ Hor. Carm. IV. 7.
§ Od. IV.

faith of the holy catholic church, in respect to the assistance of the dead and the consolation of those who mourned for them. To avaricious and insensible hearts it was a delightful prospect which opened, when it was announced that paternal inheritances were no longer to bring with them the incumbrance of solemn rites, "est sine sacris hæreditas."

In recording the work of destruction which followed the adoption of the new opinions, the Protestant historians supply abundant evidence of the pious solicitude with which men in ages of faith had provided for the relief of those who had risen from flesh to spirit, and for the consolation and advantage of their posterity. The mouldering ruins of those chantries and holy chapels which give such an interest to our woods and mountains, still attest it, and the solemn language of the statutes preserved in such institutions as were suffered to remain under an altered form, still supplies an exercise for the ingenious facility with which, according to the new moral philosophy, men can escape from the obligation of accomplishing their vow.

From the birth of Christianity prayer for the dead was observed as a divine tradition and a deposit of faith. Miles, the Protestant Oxford editor of the works of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, acknowledged the fact in these words: "It is most true that the prayer and offering for the dead prevailed in the church from the time of the apostles." That anniversary prayers for the dead were observed, appears from Tertullian *. By the conclusion which St. Perpetua was led to draw from her two visions, it is clear that the church in that early age believed the doctrine of the expiation of certain sins after death, and that she prayed for the faithful departed. We see too, that the parents of St. Agnez used to watch by night at her sepulchre. St. Augustin, after remarking that in the Book of Maccabees it is read, that sacrifice was offered for the dead, adds, "But if this had not been read in the ancient scriptures, it is not a little matter that the authority of the universal church is conspicuous in this custom, where the commendation of the dead occurs in the prayers of the priest which are offered at the altar of God†." St. Ambrose says, "that the faithful ought not so

* Lib. de Monogamia. Id. de Corona Militis, cap. 3.
† De Cura pro Mortuis.

much to deplore the souls of the departed, as to accompany them with their prayers, that they ought not to draw an argument for tears, but a subject for recommendation to the Lord *;" and St. Chrysostom says, "that they should assist the dead, not with lamentations but with prayers, supplications, and alms †." St. Augustin says of his deceased mother, "She did not command us to provide aromatics for her dead body, an especial monument, an ancestral tomb; but she only desired that she might be had in memory at thy altar, O God, whence she knew that Holy Victim was dispensed, by means of which the handwriting that was against us has been destroyed. Inspire thy servants, O Lord, that as many as read this may remember thy servant Monica with her husband Patricius at thy altar ‡." This was to provide against that purifying trial which may follow death, and against that day of which the prophets spoke, when the Lord should wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Sion, and obliterate the blood from the midst of them with the spirit of judgment and with the spirit of burning, when he should sit burning and purifying as if gold and silver, and should cleanse the sons of Levi, and melt them as gold and silver, when the sacrifice of Juda and Jerusalem should be pleasing to him as in the primitive days §. The fervour and charity of the middle ages appear in nothing more conspicuous than in the zeal of men to assist their departed friends. Many of the epistles in the collection of those of St. Boniface, are occupied in transmitting, or in requiring the names of priests and laymen deceased, that they may be commemorated at the altar. The friendship of the holy men, whom missionary zeal had scattered through distant regions, finds only one consolation in the thought that they are always united both in life and death in the heart of Jesus. Thus Doto writes as follows to the Bishop Lullo: "quamvis terrarum longitudine separati videmur, tamen et terrarum longinquitas non dividit mente, quos charitas divina conjunxit in corde ||." On this principle

* Ad Faustin. II. Epist. 8.
† Hom. XLI. in Epist. I. ad Corinth.
‡ Confess. Lib. XIX. cap. 13.
§ S. Augustini de Civit. Dei, Lib. XX. c. 25.
|| Bonifacii Epist. LXXXIV.

they might have used the words of Pindar, expressing their belief that the dead take an interest in the fortune of their surviving relations on earth.

Κατακρύπτει δ' οὐ κόνις
Συγγόνων κεδνὰν χάριν *.

The celebration of the memory of the dead on the third, seventh, thirtieth, and anniversary day, is a most ancient institution, as appears from St. Augustin and other fathers. Amalarius and Alcuin explain the mystic reason of these days as follows: "the third day after the obit," say they, "is celebrated to express our trust in the future resurrection, from the memory of our Saviour's rising on the third day; the seventh day expresses a general number or a totality, on which we pray that all their sins may be forgiven." "Luctus mortui Septem dies," says the Scripture †; and thus the sons of Jacob celebrated the obsequies of their father during seven days ‡; or because the seventh day is the sabbath, we pray the Lord of the sabbath to give them eternal rest. The thirtieth day is observed in conformity to the venerable examples of the Old Testament, as when the children of Israel wept for Aaron during the space of thirty days, and when Moses died they wept for him thirty days in the plains of Moab. And the anniversary is repeated, that in the event of their being still exposed to the purifying flames, they may be assisted by the suffrages of the faithful, for much it avails them, there to be the object of the prayers of such

——— "Whose wills
Have root of goodness in them §."

Cardinal Bona, speaking of the office of the dead, says, "that it was by an especial Providence that learned men, from the very age of the apostles, employed themselves in describing the received rites of the church, because the Holy Spirit foresaw that heresy in the latter ages would attempt to pervert and confound all things ‖." The office of the dead begins absolutely without an invo-

* Olymp. Lib. VII.
‡ Genes. l. 10.
‖ De Divina Psalmod. p. 271.
† Eccles. 22. 12.
§ Dante Purg. XI.

cation of the divine assistance, or glorification of the most holy Trinity, or benediction, or any rite indicating joy, "in order," as Amalarius says, "to correspond with what took place at the death of our Lord." Cardinal Bona observes, "that generally when we pray for the dead, we are reminded of our own end; they are dead and we are also to die, they yesterday, we to-morrow *." What an advantage, then, had the pious charity of our ancestors provided for the living also in their foundations for the spiritual wants of the dead? "Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis." The anniversaries of kings were celebrated in Gaul in a very early age. Celebrated were those of Clovis, in the church of St. Peter, now of St. Geneviève, that of his son Childebert, in the monastery of St. Vincent, now of St. Germain des Près, and that of Dagobert, in the church of St. Denis, of which there was no monument to trace the beginning †. In the sacristy of the cathedral of Ravenna, I saw several very ancient inscriptions in stone, to commemorate the obligation of the canons, to celebrate a solemn mass of requiem on certain anniversaries, which it was the object of these inscriptions to specify. Luther of Brunswick, grand master of the Teutonic order, in his last illness desired himself to be removed to Kœnigsberg, in order to make his devout prayer in the cathedral which he had lately assisted to erect. He gave orders that he should be buried in the midst of the choir, and that over his grave a light should for ever burn, for maintaining which he left funds, and that a dole and a feast should be always made on the anniversary of his death, when a solemn requiem should be sung. This was "the pure and wise master," as he was styled; "the poet, the just man, the mild ruler, the devout friend of the monks and of the poor ‡." Suger composed lessons for matins recording the virtues of Louis-le-Gros, which were read in churches where his anniversary was celebrated. It became a general custom to found and erect chapels, and sometimes even monasteries, on fields of battle, where prayer should be constantly offered up for the souls of the slain. Battle Abbey, in Sussex, was a celebrated instance, and in

* Id. 265.

† Mabillon Præfat. in III. Sæcul. Benedict. § 6.

‡ Voigt Geschichte Preussens, IV. 512.

Switzerland, the chapels of Mortgarten and Morat have been visited by most travellers in that country. After the great battle at Rudau, in 1370, the Teutonic knights erected three chapels in which masses and vigils were to be performed for the souls of the fallen; two were on the banks of the Rudau, and the third on the Laptau, and on the spot where the heroic marshal fell, the grand-master placed a vast monument, on which the names of the heroes were inscribed *. The poor gained nothing by the abolition of these anniversaries consequent on the setting up of a new religion. King Edward I. when he founded obits for his queen Eleanor, in Westminster Abbey, provided also that money should be given to the poor that came to the solemnization of the same. King Henry V. founded perpetually one day every week, a dirge with nine lessons, and a mass to be celebrated in the same abbey church, for the soul of King Richard the Second, and he appointed that on each of these days six shillings and eightpence should be given to the poor people, and on his anniversary, that twenty pounds in pence should be distributed to the most needful. These solemn anniversaries, like that of the great baron, mentioned by Dante, as he whose name and worth the festival of Thomas still reveres because commemorated on that day †, were the means of multiplying those sublime and consoling offices of religion, in which men experienced the purest delight, as well as the most salutary impressions; for of them we may say with truth, "Hæc sunt solatia, hæc fomenta summorum dolorum." Then it was that they were led to meditate on—

> "That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
> When heaven and earth shall pass away;"

to consider within their hearts

> "What power shall be the sinner's stay?
> How shall he meet that dreadful day?
> When shrivelling like a parched scroll,
> The flaming heavens together roll;
> When louder yet, and yet more dread,
> Swells the high trump that wakes the dead."

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* Voigt Geschichte Preussens, V. 220.
† Parad. XVI.

And to pray devoutly, in silence weeping,

> "Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
> When man to judgment wakes from clay,
> Be thou the trembling sinner's stay,
> Though heaven and earth shall pass away!"

And what did the church teach the while, respecting the efficacy of these suffrages in behalf of the dead? You may learn this from the canons of the church in Ireland, which were passed in about the eighth century. The Synod says, "In four modes does the church offer for the souls of the dead. For the greatly good, they are thanksgivings in whom the oblation hath nothing to obliterate; for the greatly sinful, they are consolations to the living; for those who were not greatly good, they conduce to their obtaining full remission; and for those who were not greatly sinful, to their pains being rendered more tolerable*." This was conformable to the words of St. Augustin; "For some men after their death, the prayers of the church or of pious people are heard; but it is for those, who after their baptism, neither lived so ill as to be judged unworthy of such mercy, nor yet so well as not to need such mercy†." Besides these anniversaries and the solemn season, which was expressly devoted by the church for the discharge of this sacred duty, there were innumerable occasions on which it was usual in the middle ages to apply to it. "The church," says St. Augustin, "as a faithful mother, prays for all her children departed, that they who left no parents or friends may still have the benefit of suffrage‡." In many countries, as in France, it was the custom for "le Clocheteur des Trépassés to go about the streets at night with a bell, chanting out in a solemn tone,

> "Réveillez-vous, gens qui dormez,
> Priez Dieu pour les Trépassés."

Marchangy says, "that, in some provinces, funds used to be left by will to churches for the purpose of keeping

* Capitula Selecta Canonum Hibernens. ex libro XV. cap. ii. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IX.

† De Civitate Dei, Lib. XXI. cap. 24.

‡ De Cura pro Mortuis.

up a cry, every Monday at one o'clock after midnight, to the sound of two bells for the commemoration of the dead." It used also to be a pious custom on board passage boats, as we still find in those which take passengers from Naples to Sorrento, and in many others which ply upon the rivers of the north of Italy, to ask a subscription for masses for the souls in purgatory.

As a conclusion to this chapter, let us hear the affecting words in which Ælred, Abbot of Rivaulx, speaks of his love for a departed friend, who, as he says, "had admitted him to his friendship from the very commencement of his conversion to a religious life." With this passage the first book of his Speculum Charitatis ends, and it is highly worthy of our attention in this place, as revealing the thoughts and minds of men during the ages of faith, with respect to the mourning of surviving friends, and to the reasons of the duty which devolved upon them to pray earnestly for the departed soul. "Certainly," he exclaims, "as far as my eyes can discern, O Lord, there was nothing in thy servant which could be an impediment to him in passing to thy embraces; but no man knows what is within man unless the spirit of man which is in him; whereas thy eye, O Lord, penetrates to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart; and as a certain worthy servant said, 'Væ etiam laudabili vitæ hominum, si remota pietate discutiatur.' Behold then, O Lord, the source of my fear and of my tears. Attend to them, O thou most sweet and merciful Saviour! Receive them, O thou my only hope, my one and only refuge, my God! Receive, O Lord, the sacrifices which I offer to thee for my beloved friend, and whatever stains may remain in him, either pardon or impute them to me. Strike me: on me let thy anger fall; only hide not thy blessed face from him; withdraw not thy sweetness from him. O my Lord, let him experience the consolations of thy mercy, which he so earnestly desired, in which he so securely confided, to which he commended himself with such sweet vehemence, during that night when, after the other brethren had withdrawn, and one only was left to watch by him, he was heard to break forth with those repeated words, 'Misericordiam, misericordiam, misericordiam!' He was endeavouring," as they say, "to sing the whole of

that verse, 'Misericordiam et judicium cantabo tibi, Domine;' but recalled by the sweetness of that first word, he could proceed no farther, and so rested in the repetition; and when he saw the brother, who sat by his bed, not appearing to be equally impressed with a sense of its sweetness, he caught his hand, and, pressing it with earnest emotion, repeated again, 'Misericordiam, misericordiam.' That soul seems to have been dissolved in ineffable joy at the thought of such grace, feeling that its sins were absorbed in this immense ocean of divine mercy, so that nothing was left to oppress or terrify the conscience. As for me, I will follow thee with my tears, with my prayers, with the sacrifice of our Mediator. And do thou, O Father Abraham, extend thy arms again and again to receive this poor one of Christ, this other Lazarus, receiving and cherishing him as he returns from the miseries of this life; and to me also, who so loved him, grant a place of rest along with him in thy bosom."

CHAPTER IX.

When Ulysses was conducting Neoptolemus to Troy, the vessel passed within sight of the tomb of the great Æacides, and in the painting which Quintus Calaber gives of this voyage, there is an admirable stroke of nature, truly Homeric, in reference to it:

> Τοῖσι δ' ἄρ' Ἰδαίων ὀρέων φαίνοντο κόλωναι,
> Χρύσα τε, καὶ Σμίνθειον ἔδος, καὶ Σίγιας ἄκρη.
> Τύμβος τ' Αἰακίδαο δαΐφρονος· ἀλλά μιν οὔτι
> Υἱὸς Λαέρταο πυκαφρονέων ἐνὶ θυμῷ
> Δεῖξε Νεοπτολέμῳ, ἵνα οἱ μὴ πένθος ἀέξῃ
> Θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι *.

In the ages of faith, as well as in more ancient days, it was a work of humanity and of religion in which mourn-

* Od. VII. 401.

ers found a sweet delight, to commemorate the dead even by a material monument. It was a Catholic as well as an Homeric practice, by means of sepulchres, to remind the living of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, to raise a mound or a symbol upon the spot on which the brave or good had fallen, to pile up a tomb upon the shore of the wild sea,

ἀνδρὸς δυστήνοιο, καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι *.

Euripides says, "that the traveller, as he passes by the tomb of Alcestis, will thither bend his devious way, with reverence gaze, and with a sigh smite on his breast." And in the early and middle ages of Christian history, to behold a sepulchre, and to supplicate God over a particular grave, would be the object of long and painful journeys.

Who knows not the sublime and wondrous event which of itself has served to designate a long period of the ages which we are attempting to illustrate? Who has not continually on his tongue the ages of the crusades; the ages in which men renounced their homes, their country, their friends, engaged in all the horrors of a long and perilous navigation, exposed themselves to the dangers of an Asiatic and pestilential climate, willingly rushed forward to encounter death in every form and circumstance that could render it painful, and all this for a tomb?

In such an age it was natural that the spirit of mourning should have developed itself in every gracious and solemn form that harmonized with the genius of love and memory, that it should have perpetuated, by material monuments on this earth, some traces of the affection of children, and of parents, and of friends, that it should have multiplied those sepulchres which relate the untimely departure of heroic worth, which exhibit the overflowings of youthful sorrow, or the calm and brief expressions of experienced wisdom, tombs which recall the images of youth, and beauty, and goodness,

——— "at sight whereof
Tears often stream forth, by remembrance wak'd,
Whose sacred stings the piteous only feel †."

* Od. XI. 76. † Dant. Purg. XII.

Alban Butler remarks, "that the primitive Christians were solicitous not to bury their dead among the infidels, as appears from Gamaliel's care in this respect, mentioned by Lucian in his account of the discovery of St. Stephen's relics, as also from St. Cyprian, who makes it a crime in Martialis, a Spanish bishop, to have buried Christians in profane sepulchres *." To be buried near the holy martyrs was a great object of their desire; this was the wish of St. Ambrose in dying, for which S. Maximus assigns the following reason: "Hoc à majoribus provisum est, ut sanctorum ossibus nostra corpora sociemus, ut dum illos tartarus metuit, nos pœna non tangat." In the cemetery of St. Calixtus, pope and martyr, on the Appian way, were buried more than one hundred and seventy-four thousand martyrs and forty-six popes. With what awe, with what unutterable reverence did I descend into the catacombs of St. Calixtus, of St. Cyriacus, and of St. Marcellinus, preceded by the friar holding the small taper, which every moment seemed about to be extinguished by a sudden blast from some fresh passage among the sombre vaults! Here I was told St. Lucia laid the body of St. Sebastian: there was found the body of St. Cecilia; further on was discovered the body of the holy martyr Maximus; on this side lay a pope, on that several children. O what a solemn and religious place! and how it fills the soul with emotions indescribable of joy and sorrow; one might call it Pausilypus, παῦσις τῆς λύπης, the end of grief. Truly here death hath no sting: the grave no victory. One would wish to lie down here in peace, that one's soul might follow whither these are already gone. "Hospites fuerunt super terram et ego: tanquam umbra subito transierunt et ego." Into the catacombs of St. Calixtus one descends from the Basilica of St Sebastian, and on the wall near the entrance there is an inscription on stone, containing the account which St. Jerome gives of this very spot: "When I was a boy studying at Rome," says the holy doctor, "I used, with other companions of my age and inclination, to go about diligently every Sunday amidst the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs, in the crypts which are excavated in the depth of the earth, having the bodies of the dead on both sides for walls,

* S. Cypriani Epist. 68.

and where all things are so obscure, that one might say the prophetic word was fulfilled, "Descendant ad infernum viventes." The scanty light, at rare intervals admitted from above, only tempers the horror of the darkness, and serves to deepen the black night which succeeds to it. One is reminded of that Virgilian line,

"Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa silentia terrent*."

In early times, none but martyrs, bishops, and abbots, were allowed to be buried within the church. No title of nobility conferred this privilege, and no money was required for burial, but oblations were received and even enjoined by many kings.

The Roman ritual, however, requires that the poor should be buried wholly gratis. The exclusion of heretics, and of such as died deprived of ecclesiastical peace, was a primitive discipline which was never renounced. Thus at Ravenna, the sepulchres of the Arain Goths, and of the ministers of King Theodoric, were removed out of the churches, as soon as the Catholics regained possession of them; and many of these are now arranged in a museum within the archiepiscopal palace. At the same time it may be well to remark how religion, in the middle ages, guarded men from contracting any superstitious opinion of the importance of burial in holy ground, and from that error which led so many poets of antiquity to describe the sepulchre as a place of rest for the body, within which the dead man reposed; as in these verses which Cicero ridicules:—

"Neque sepulcrum, quo recipiat, habeat, portum corporis;
Ubi, remissâ humanâ vitâ, corpus requiescat malis."

"Is it an injury to the just if they be not buried in the cemetery of the church?" is a question that occurs in a work ascribed to St. Anselm; to which the answer is made, "By no means: for the whole world is the temple of God, which is consecrated by the blood of Christ; and therefore, whether they be cast out, or buried in the field, or in the wood, or in the marsh, or in what place soever, they are always preserved within the bosom of

* S. Hieronymi in Ezech. Com. cap. 40.

the Church, which is spread over the whole earth. Is it of advantage to the just to be buried in holy places? Places become sacred in which just men are buried; but to those who suffer it is of advantage, because when their friends meet there, they are reminded by their monuments to offer up prayers to God for them. Is it of any service to the wicked to be buried in a holy place? Nay, it is rather an injury to be associated in sepulture with those from whom they are far separated in merit *."

All this had been shown by St. Augustin in answer to Paulinius, Bishop of Nola, who had consulted him on being entreated by a certain widow, who desired that the dead body of her son, a faithful youth, might be buried in the Basilica of the blessed Confessor Felix. "The devotion of the mother to the martyr," says St. Augustine, "is itself a supplication in behalf of her son, and, therefore, it may be to his advantage to be interred in that Basilica: adjuvat defuncti spiritum, non mortui corporis locus, sed ex loci memoria vivus matris affectus. It seems to me, that the only advantage to the dead in being buried near the martyrs is, that by commending them to the patronage of martyrs, the ardour of that supplication for them is increased †."

At first, indeed, even the bishops, saints, and martyrs, were buried near the church; "juxta ecclesiam," as Bede says of St. Augustin's body. This was in the front court, the Paradisus Ecclesiæ, as at Rome; or in France, Ecclesiæ Parvisium. The ancient canons forbid any one to be buried within the church itself ‡. Thus, before many of the churches of Ravenna, as at the cathedral and before the Basilica of St. John the Baptist, stand vast sarcophaguses, in which great personages were buried, before it was permitted to entomb any one within the church. Those in the Basilica of St. Apollinare, in Classe, containing the ashes of the early archbishops, have been placed within during later ages, for originally they stood without. Thus still is placed at St. Vitale the sepulchre of Isaac, Exarch of Ravenna, that illustrious Armenian who commanded armies in the East and in the West, and whose

* S. Anselmi Elucidarii, Lib. II. cap. 31.

† De Cura pro Mortuis.

‡ Thomassinus de Vet. et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplin. Pars III. Lib. i. c. 68.

glory, as the epitaph pompously sets forth, reached from the rising to the setting sun!

Constantine was buried in the porch of the Apostles at Constantinople; Honorius in the porch of St. Peter at Rome; St. Augustin, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, was interred in the porch of St. Peter and St. Paul, which was a church of his foundation near Canterbury, and together with him, six other archbishops who next succeeded him, whose relics were afterwards removed into the Abbey Church.

In the fourth century, bishops were buried within the church; though, for a long time after, only bishops, abbots, holy priests, and laics of the utmost sanctity, were allowed to be buried in churches *. By degrees, however, this salutary discipline was broken through, and persons of all ranks, without regard to spiritual qualifications, were admitted to be buried within the church; the only distinction required being, that laymen should be placed with their feet towards the altar, while ecclesiastics should have their heads next it, as if fronting the people. Still the memory of the former discipline prevailed, so far as sometimes to induce great princes, through humility, and as an expression of penitence, to command that their bodies should be interred without the walls. An instance of this occurs in the history of Suger; for we read, that when he proposed to rebuild the Abbey Church of St. Denis, the entrance was obstructed by a great massive porch, which concealed the portal. This had been built by Charlemagne from a pious motive. Pepin his father was buried under that spot, not laid on his back, like other dead men, but prostrate, with his face against the ground, in order to denote, as he had said, that he wished to make amends for the excesses committed by his father, Charles Martel. Charlemagne, not enduring that his father should lie buried without the church, had built this huge porch, that by this contrivance he might be within it. Suger, however, had the body removed to another place, and the porch destroyed †.

The Church, in several synods, proposed to restore the ancient discipline respecting sepulchres, and strong

* Durandus Rationale, Lib. I. cap. 5.

† Hist. de Suger, Lib. IV.

measures were enforced to correct the abuses which time and the pride of family had introduced. In the Council of Rheims, in the year 1583, it was decreed that no tombs should be erected higher than the ground, and that no statues, or military standards, or trophies, should be placed upon them, and that the dead were only to be praised in becoming language. "Quæ ad pietatem et preces pro mortuis faciendas spectent potius, quam defunctorum enarrandis laudibus insumantur *. By the Council of Tholouse, in the year 1590, no inscriptions or emblems were to be placed in the church but such as were approved of by the bishop or archdeacon †. The occasion of these statutes was the Pagan taste, which had begun to affect even the ancient style of sepulchral architecture.

The tomb of the Scipios is carved in marble, and adorned with works of art; but the sepulchres of the martyrs were rude and solemn. In the Catacombs, the inscriptions and emblems over the Christian graves are very simple—such as, "The holy martyr, Maximus." —"In pace Hippolitus, amator pauperum."—"Gregoria in pace." Sometimes there is an iron grating to preserve the slab, on which some saint has slept, from being worn away by the devout kisses of the faithful. In the cloisters of St. Paul, in those of St. Lorenzo and of St. Agnez extra Muros, and in the porch of St. Maria in Trastevere, as also in one gallery in the Vatican, you see the simple inscriptions which used to be placed over the martyrs; for these slabs have been removed from the Catacombs, where they covered the apertures of the recesses in which the bodies lay. The emblems, which are in general but rudely carved, are very numerous. You see a bird with a branch in its bill,—a heart,—crossed palms;—a ship in full sail near a tower, on the top of which is a flame;—a man holding out his arms extended in prayer;—a boy riding on a dolphin;—a barrel, and the monogram of Christ;—a man preaching from a pulpit, and a bird bringing to him a branch;—an anchor;—two birds about to drink from a chalice;—one bird feeding another;—a fish, a lion, a leopard, wheels, hatchets, crooks and spears. The interest in-

* Can. de Sepult.

† Thomassinus de Vet. et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplin. Pars III. Lib. i. cap. 68.

spired by such monuments must of course greatly exceed what can be generally experienced. But although we cannot expect to feel similar emotions from beholding the tombs of a later date, there is still, in those of the middle ages, a majestic simplicity, a most venerable air of holiness, which is enough to startle, and reduce to silent awe, the curious observer of our days. In the first place, the words inscribed upon them are generally full of sublimity. The heathen sepulchral inscriptions, preserved in the gallery of the Vatican, are very minute in specifying the exact age and the abundant merits of the person, who, as on the modern tombs, in countries that have abandoned the ancient creed, is always shown to have been "bene meritus." Nothing however, in ancient times, bore resemblance to the vanity and bombast of the modern epitaphs, of which that on Sir Philip Sidney in St. Paul's, beginning, "England, Netherland, the heavens and the arts," may be assumed as the perfect model. This was not the style adopted in ages of faith. The tomb of Suger, in the abbey of St. Denis, consisted of a simple stone, raised about three feet high, on which these four words were inscribed—"Cy gist l'abbé Suger,"—which gives occasion to Mabillon to remark how much nobler was the style of inscriptions in the middle ages, than that, so full of pompous affectation, which had begun to introduce itself in his time *.

The epitaph in brass on the Black Prince, in the cathedral of Canterbury, was this.—"Here lieth the noble Prince, Edward, the eldest son of the thrice-noble King Edward the Third, who died on the feast of the Trinity, in the year of grace, 1376: to the soul of whom, God grant mercy. Amen."

How impressive are those old English inscriptions given by Weever, like that at Minster in Shepey:—"In the most holy name of Jesu, pray for the sowls of John and Margaret:"—or those in Stone Church: "O merciful Jesew, have mercy on the sowl of Sir John Dew. Sweet Jesew, grant to William and Anne and us, everlastyng lyff. Pray yow hertely for charitie. Say a Pater Noster and an Ave."

Thomas Brenton, Bishop of Rochester, confessor to King Richard II. who travelled into many places beyond

* De Studiis Monast. Pars II. cap. 12.

seas, and preached at Rome before the Pope, being famous for his learning and rare endowments, was buried at Seale, under a marble stone, on which was his portraiture, and only these words were inscribed:—"Credo quod Redemptor meus vivit;" and these figures, 1389.

On the tomb of Sir John Lumbard, priest, in Stone Church, were certain Latin rhymes, beseeching whoever passed by, whether he were a grown man or only a boy, to pray that his soul might find mercy. In the north cloister of St. Paul's Cathedral, a grave-stone without a name had only this inscription: "Vixi, peccavi, penitui, naturæ cessi." In the Temple Church was an inscription, imploring prayer for the soul of Richard Wye, and only these lines added:—"Domine, secundum delictum meum noli me judicare. Deprecor Majestatem tuam ut tu deleas iniquitatem meam." The epitaph on King Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey, consists of these three hexameters:—

> "Omnibus insignis virtutum laudibus Heros,
> Sanctus Edwardus Confessor, Rex venerandus;
> Quinto die Jani moriens super Ethera scandit.
> Sursum corda. Moritur Ann. Dom. 1065."

The only words upon the tomb of that potent noble, William Bourchier, Earl of Eu, in Normandy, which was in the Church of Little Easton, were these:—"Fili Dei, miserere mei; mater Dei, miserere mei." At Boston was a fair tomb, whereon were engraven in brass the names of John Deynes and Katherine his wife, and these two words only added, "Respice, Respice!"—an allusion probably to the prayer of the Passion, which begins with these words.

The sepulchral inscriptions upon the religious, and on certain young students, in the Abbey of St. Alban, made by the Abbot Whethamsted, were of such interest and beauty in the estimation of Weever, that, although the brasses containing them had been plundered from the grave-stones, he yet inscribed them in his book, having collected them from the manuscript of the abbey. In Catholic countries, which have never witnessed the barbarous rage against the dead, their monuments should be objects of minute attention, and they will often repay it. I observed a very ancient sepulchral slab in

the pavement of the old Cathedral of Ravenna, to commemorate Gregorius. There was no date or other notice, but only the figure of a cross, and written under it, in very ancient characters, "O crux sancta, adjuva nos." In the same church Gerardus, archbishop, who died in the year of our Lord 113, was commemorated by a simple leaden tablet. In the cathedral of Sienna I remarked on the pavement a tomb slab, representing a bishop holding clasped in both hands a book open, in which was written, "Firmiter credimus, simpliciter confitemur." There was no name or date or other words. In the cloisters of the Abbey of Fontenelle may still be seen many sepulchral stones, very small and humble, with no other ornament but a little Greek cross and a simple tear under it. There is no name engraved, but only the day, month, and year of the departure.—It was well for a poet or a philosopher when it devolved on monks to compose the inscriptions for his tomb. What pilgrim, who has visited Rome, has not been induced to ascend that toilsome hill on which stands the humble convent of St. Onufrio? Within the court are two orange trees of great height, reaching above the cloistered arches, and even overshadowing the windows in the upper stage. In the church, at the left hand of the western door, on entering, is a small slab, on which you read these words:—"The bones of Torquato Tasso lie here. Lest the stranger should not know the spot, the brethren have marked it with this stone." Did not the poor Hieronymites know how to write the poet's epitaph?

In the middle ages, as in Italy and other Catholic countries at the present day, there was often, in sepulchral inscriptions, a kind of struggle indicated between humility and the desire of edifying the living, by attesting some peculiar trait in the character of the dead. Thus I have frequently observed some testimony of this kind: on one it would be, "Pious towards God;" on another, "A lover of the Poor;" on another, "Devout in the care of Temples." Men had not to compose epitaphs for persons like Timocreon of Rhodes, on whose tombs a sentence of piety would sound like a satire, or the anticipation of God's judgment. On the tomb of Lodovico de Bellomonte, Bishop of Durham, who lay buried before the high altar in that church, were engraven in

brass certain divine and celestial sayings of the holy Scriptures, which he used peculiarly to select for his spiritual consolation*."

In the Campo Santo at Pisa is a tomb associated with many historical recollections of saintly interest, on which the inscription, if not in the best style of latinity, at least presents a singular contrast to the style of those Pagan epitaphs with which it is surrounded, being preserved there as relics of art. On this tomb, which contained the ashes of the mother of the Countess Matilda, we read—

> "Quamvis peccatrix sum Domina vocata Beatrix
> In tumulo missa jaceo quæ Comitissa."

Indeed, to examine the sepulchres of the middle ages, which yet remain, forms one of the most interesting employments for the leisure of a philosophic traveller, who, like Pausanius, after traversing Greece, may find it well to occupy one-half of his relation with the description of tombs. Where does he feel deeper emotion than, for example, on entering the cathedral of Salerno, to behold the sepulchre of that sublime and illustrious saint, Pope Gregory VII., who died there a fugitive, repeating these words with his last breath—"Dilexi justitiam et odivi iniquitatem; propterea morior in exilio." With what a sweet melancholy does one wander through the cloisters of the great monastery adjoining the Basilica of St. Anthony at Padua, or pass before the numerous chapels in that vast church, reading, as one walks, the inscriptions over the learned, or the saintly or heroic dead! What a testimony do they furnish to the spirit and manners of Catholic times! Some commemorate the warrior who united letters and philosophy with arms; who, in his life time, many a noble act achieved, both by his wisdom and his sword. Such are the tombs of Stephen de Ripa, of the Ubaldini family, and of Ascanio Zabaralla; others, the holy and profoundly learned monk, who, after a long course of public teaching of theology in that ancient university, departed to the source of truth. These are chiefly to friars of the seraphic order of St. Francis, who are represented teaching on their sepulchres.

* The Ancient Rites and Monuments of Durham, p. 25.

Others, again, as that tomb of the Polish knight, Adamus Zalinsky, record the studious, chaste, and valiant traveller, who had seen Africa and Asia, and who had resolved upon visiting Jerusalem, when death constrained him to leave here his toil-worn limbs. On one sepulchre, as on that of Andrew Arcolus, you are told of the mathematician and astronomer, who united zeal for science with piety to God. Such is the testimony to his virtue, conveyed in these lines—

> "Astrorum motus omnes, arcanaque prompsit
> Dextera; mens hæret qui movet astra Deo."

On another, of the orator who loved peace, and who studied to preserve it to his fellow-citizens. Such is the inscription on Father Paulin, which is intended to transmit nothing more respecting him to posterity than that he loved peace and pursued it. There are tombs, as that of Wesling, the Mindan knight, to the learned and devoted physician, who had visited Egypt for the sake of studying exotic roots, and of acquiring a knowledge of all arts; and who, on returning, falls a victim to his pious labours in gratuitously tending the sick poor in a time of pestilence. There are others which attest the miracles of humility and of seraphic ardour, which have been wrought by the Catholic religion in the breasts of the learned, and of those endowed by heaven with extraordinary genius. Such is the tomb of that illustrious woman, Helen Cornelia Lucretia Piscopia Cornaro, who united an admirable sublimity of soul, and a most tender piety, to prodigious knowledge, being mistress of seven languages; so that, being greatly honoured by the princes of Europe, and especially by Pope Innocent XI., and after devoting herself to a life of religious and philosophic contemplation, coming to Padua in obedience to the command of her father, she received publicly the laurel crown of philosophy, an example unparalleled within the memory of man in that celebrated college. There are others, too, erected over the diligent, innocent, amiable, and holy youth, who, in the midst of his academic studies, distinguished himself by his kindness to the poor, and his ardent desires after the heavenly country, whose only fault was too much application, and too little care of himself. Such, or similar, is the character

ascribed on their sepulchres to Henry de Gram the Saxon, Camillus Bonaventura the Roman, Ludovicus of Brixia, Frederick Rota of Bergamo, and a number of other young noblemen and students, who died during their course at that university; and to some of whom, having no parents, the slab is erected by their dearest college friend. The affecting inscription on the tomb of Andrew Canzki, a young Pole, who died on his travels in Italy, would apply to many a pilgrim who visited that sacred land without ever seeing the day of return—

> "Italiam peragro dum sospes quinque per annos,
> Hei patrium repetens mors mihi vertit iter."

There are tombs which seem to admonish the living in asking indulgence for the dead. Such is that tomb of John Trivulzio Magnus, in the church of St. Nazarus at Milan, on which is written, "Joan Jacobus Magnus Trivultius Antonii filius, qui nunquam quievit quiescit. Tace." And such that tomb over the beautiful Agnes in the Abbey of Jumièges, on which was this short and touching epitaph—"Cy gist Damoiselle Agnes Seurette, en son vivant dame de beauté, Dissoudum et de Vernon-suo-Seine, pitieuse aux pauvres, laquelle trespassa le 9 Fevrier en l'an 1449*." There are others which seem not so much the tombs of men as the true monuments of chivalrous and Castilian honour. Such are those two sepulchres in the church of Santa Maria la Nova at Naples, which were generously raised by the Duke of Sessa, nephew of the Great Gonzalve and Governor of Naples, to two unfortunate warriors, who were his enemies, Lautrec and Pierre Navarre. There are some tombs, which so abruptly present the image of private domestic virtues amidst the solemn magnificence of sepulchral art, that it is hardly possible to view them without weeping. They affect the stranger, too, because in a foreign and beauteous land, they remind him of the virtues of his own, or rather that in every country the amiable disposition is the same. Such is that tomb in the Campo Santo, near Bologna, of a young Genoese, of Patrician family, John Baptist Sebastian Cattaneo de Volta, whose innocent boyish form is represented above,

* Taillepied, Antiquitez de Rouen.

and of the manners of whose holy youth a simple and touching account is given, describing how he sighed after heaven, and how for the first time he gave his parents sorrow when he died. Some tombs there were attesting the bonds of a mysterious friendship, such as that in the monastery of Medianum, which commemorated two brethren, John and Benign, both disciples of St. Hydulph, both born on the same day, and who were never separated from each other from childhood; having been educated together, trained in the same studies, clad in the monastic cowl on the same day; having lived together, fallen sick together on the same day, died and received into Heaven on the same, and then their bodies buried in one tomb*. There were tombs which seemed erected for the peculiar delight of poets. Such were those in the church of St. Francis at Ferrara. To commemorate heroes, sung by Ariosto, there were others, as if to proclaim, without vanity, the force of ancestral virtue, such as that in the church of Ecouen to the family of Chardon, on which one reads—

> "Chardoneæ gentis cernis commune sepulcrum,
> Conspicuos clero, Marte, togâque viros."

There are tombs on which the inscription seems to combine the playful irony of Socrates, during his last moments, described so sublimely in the Phædo, with the serene majesty of the Gospel. Such is that sepulchre in the cathedral of Ravenna, on which these words are inscribed—"Hic non jacet Donatus Capra. S. Raven. Ecclesiæ canonicus. Illud tantum hic jecit quod jacere potuisset in hoc monumento: mortalia deposuit qui totum virtute se voluit immortalem. Medicus fuit sed alios curavit non se ipsum. Suum esse nihil censuit præter animum. Et hoc nunquam ægrotavit. Sal. MDCIIL. recessit." At least, the style of this inscription presents a great contrast to the first line on a neighbouring, but far more illustrious sepulchre—

> "Hic Claudor Danthes Patris extorris ab oris."

But it was not merely in the style of the inscriptions that the interest of the ancient Catholic sepulchres con-

* Chronic. Senoniensis, Lib. II. c. xi. apud Dacher. Tom. III.

sisted. The designs, the emblems, the images, were all strongly characteristic of the ages of faith. Undoubtedly, pomp and magnificence belonged to the sepulchres of the great. "Henry VII. in Westminster dwelleth," as Lord Bacon says, "more richly dead in the monument of his tomb than he did alive in Richmond, or any of his palaces." King Henry III. caused a coffin to be made of pure gold and precious stones for the holy relics of Edward the Confessor, and so artificially was it carved by the most cunning goldsmiths, that, although the matter was of inestimable value, "yet the workmanship excelled it," as Matthew Paris saith. When Henry V. died, his queen, Catherine, caused a royal figure to be placed upon his tomb, covered all over with silver plate gilded, the head of which was of massive silver; so that, at "the reformation," when the "battering hammers of destruction," as Master Speed saith, "did sound in every church," it was broken and carried off as a prize, and only a headless monument left. "The funeral pomp and the solemn monuments, adorned with images and precious stones ought not," says Savedra, "to pass for signs of vanity in princes, but rather as evidence of a generous piety, which marks the last bounds of human greatness, and shows, in the magnificence with which it honours their ashes, the respect which is due to majesty, for tombs are a mute history of the duties, and the end of man*." Neither ought this care of monuments, or attention to the preservation of particular bodies, to be regarded as arguing, in the men of past times, any inconsistency in their firm belief respecting the general resurrection of the flesh. The moderns would have had nothing to teach them. "The dead," says Louis of Blois, "moulder into ashes, or are devoured by dogs; but all the particles that are dispersed are whole to God, for they are in those elements of the world whence they first came out when we were made: we see them not, but God knows whence he can bring them forth again, since, before we were, he know how to produce us †." The emblems upon tombs, and the whole development of sepulchral architecture in the middle ages, indicated a mind essentially Christian; and the departure from this style,

* Christian Prince II. 588. † Tractat. in Ps. lxii.

in the deplorable times which followed, was loudly lamented by all who retained any reverence for antiquity. "If any one," says Weever, "shall seriously survey the tombes erected in these our dayes, and examine the particulars of the personages wrought upon their tombes, he may easily discerne the vanity of our mindes, vailed under our fantasticke habits and attires, which, in time to come, will be rather provocations to vice than incitations to virtue; and so the Temple of God shall become a schoolehouse of the monstrous habits and attires of our present age; and which is worse, they garnish their tombes now adayes with the pictures of naked men and women, and bring into the Church the memories of the heathen gods and goddesses*."

Upon the sepulchres of the middle ages, the Passion, or Resurrection of our Lord, were the most ordinary representations. Kings and nobles of illustrious houses sought no separation from ecclesiastics in the ornaments to be placed upon their graves. The magnificent tomb of Louis XII. and Anne of Bretagne, which was executed by Paul-Ponce, was surrounded with statues of the twelve Apostles. The tomb of O Piers Shoonks, lord of an ancient decayed house, well moated near Burnt Pelham, who died twenty years after the conquest, which is in the church of Pelham Furnix, contains his figure, carved in stone, and about it are represented an eagle, a lion, a bull, and an angel, to denote the four evangelists. Upon the wall of St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, was the image of Jesus, as also the figure of a lady kneeling before it, with this inscription, "Here, before the image of Jesu, lieth the worshipfull and right noble Ladie Margaret, Countesse of Shrewsbury, late wife of the true and victorious knight, John Talbot, Earle of Shrewsbury, which Countess passed from this world the fourteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord 1468; on whose soule Jesu have mercy. Amen."

Who has not experienced a mysterious influence on regarding the sepulchres of the middle ages, which remain in our ancient churches, where saints have left those weeds that in the last great day will shine so bright, on

* A Discourse of Funeral Monuments, chap. iii.

which kings and heroes, mitred monks, and blessed eremites, are represented in such revering forms of devotion that one almost expects to see tears start from them! These are all the works of men, who ever thought, as they carved the stone, that they were gaining heaven. Ah! how do these images of the dead seem to admonish the living! These hands, with palms so fervently joined, these arms, so meekly crossed upon the breast, that face, so full of sweet melancholy, that whole composure of the limbs, so humble, so devout, so full of reverence! How does not all this seem to admonish us, coming suddenly as we often do upon them, with obdurate hearts and minds distracted, and a body abandoned to a proud disdainful demeanour, the consequence of a long intercourse with the modern society which requires it as a passport to favour. How are we struck with awe, and how does the memory of holy things irresistibly return at the spectacle: the dead seem to reprove us from their sepulchres, and the stones themselves to have acquired an expression which can pierce through the very deepest intricacy of our hearts. If it were only on these grounds methinks what St. Gregory of Tours relates would not seem incredible: that in the church of Vodollacenum, on the river Garonne, where two holy priests were buried, one near the south and the other near the north wall, while the clergy were singing the office, it was thought that the voices of these saints were heard to join in the choir with wonderful sweetness *. These monuments were often designed and even executed by holy priests and religious men. The monk who wrote the chronicle of Sens published by Dacherius says, after relating the death of Anthony, Abbot of his monastery, "he was buried in a stone tomb, upon which afterwards I carved with my own hands an image of the abbot, as if reposing, and holding his pastoral staff in his hand †." If Cicero thought it worthy of mention in his Tusculan disputations, that he had discovered under a covering of thorns and weeds, the antique sepulchre of Archimedes, bearing a sphere and a cylinder carved upon it, which was unknown to the Syracusans themselves, what Catholic

* De gloria Confessorum, cap. 47.

† Chronic. Sinoniensis, Lib. II. cap. 21. Spicileg. Tom. III.

need fear to describe his impressions, when in a land of darkness and unbelief, he has unexpectedly found upon the earth-level tomb within some ancient desecrated temple, the sculptured form of a tonsured priest clad in holy vestments, and holding in his hands the chalice and the paten! Unknown and unintelligible to the descendants of the men who once were so familiar with holy rites, that poor stone seems in his eyes like an altar, which it would be sacrilege to touch, excepting with the devout and solemn kiss of revering lips. Ah, if those who lie within these sepulchres were seen, what would be thought even by the simple rustics of the pompous and scornful men who now tread upon them, "ne'er mindful to ruminate the bed beneath their feet!"

St. Gregory of Tours, speaking of a place where the bodies of a vast number of the faithful were interred, after observing, "that although some who lay buried there had been blessed martyrs, yet they had no particular commemoration," concludes with a remark which must be often suggested to those who wander among the time-worn sepulchres of the ages of faith. "Sunt enim ibi ut diximus," saith he, "illustrium meritorum viri, quorum nomina, ignota incolis, scripta tamen ut credimus, retinentur in cœlis *." It was not alone within churches that the monuments of the dead in the middle ages assumed that solemn form. There were holy fields in the neighbourhood of cities and within the walls of monasteries, which were all thick spread with sepulchres, like that place mentioned in the history of Charlemagne †, and alluded to by Dante, "where Rhone stagnates on the plains of Arles ‡." Archbishop Ubaldo Lanfranci, who accompanied Richard Cœur-de-Lion to the holy land, on his return in the year 1200, brought back with him to Pisa a large quantity of earth from Mount Calvary, and deposited it on the spot round which the cloisters of that celebrated Campo Santo were erected. On the great plain south of Paris, there was a place of burial from the time of the Pagans. An ancient oratory stood there dedicated under the invocation of St. Michael, for in former times there was always a St. Michael's chapel

* De gloria Confessorum, cap. 42.
† Turpin, cap. 28 and 30.
‡ Hell. IX.

within or near great burying grounds*. An image of the holy Archangel, weighing the souls in his balance, remained till the revolution, on the highest point over this plain, which was the pinnacle of the church of Nôtre Dame-des-Champs†. The turret of the Holy Innocents at Paris, like that which Dom Mabillon remarked at Bonneval in the diocese of Chartres, and that in the cemetery of Sarlat, were probably to contain lights to guide persons who came to the church at matins. Peter the Venerable speaks of a tower built in the midst of the cemetery of the Abbey of Cherlieu, in the diocese of Macon, on the top of which a lamp used to be lighted every night, through respect for the holy place in which the faithful reposed‡; and in the cemetery of Cluny he mentions, that there was a stone pedestal in the centre on which there was a lamp which was always burning during the night, through reverence of the faithful who there rested§. The cemetery of the Carthusian monastery of Calci near Pisa, is a most impressive and yet smiling spot. It forms a lovely garden in the midst of the cloister; a fountain of marble and bronze stands in the centre, and the Apennines clothed with olives rise on all sides in beautiful undulations above the white Arcades. On the right are buried the priests, in the centre are the lay-brethren, and on the left those who minister. Such is the plan adopted in all monasteries of that order, as may be seen at Florence, Pavia, Ferrara, and Bologna.

In conclusion, though it is painful to be obliged to introduce such recollections, we must remark that the ancient monuments of the Christian dead have in these latter ages been the object of both religious and political hatred, so that in England and France we have only some scanty vestiges remaining of the sepulchral magnificence of the ages of faith.

Weever was led to compile his great work on ancient funeral monuments from observing how barbarously the sepulchres and epitaphs of the illustrious dead in England had been broken down and effaced, the brazen inscriptions torn away for lucre sake, and their beauty destroyed through "the malignitie of wicked people,

* Lebeuf. Hist. du diocèse de Paris, Tom. III. 230.
† Id. Tom. I. chap. 6. ‡ Id. Tom. I. chap. 2.
§ De Miraculis, Lib. II. 27.

and," as he says, "our English profane tenacitie. Nothing," he adds, "will be shortly left to continue the memory of the deceased to posterity; pilfery and the opinion some have, that tombs and their epitaphs taste somewhat of popery, having already most sacrilegiously stolen, erased, and taken away, almost all the inscriptions and epitaphs inlaid or engraven upon sepulchres, and most shamefully defaced the glorious rich tombs and goodly monuments of our most worthy ancestors," and he expresses a wish that some order might be taken for the preservation of the few yet remaining, for to his own knowledge, by the observation he had made in many churches, "the monuments of the dead were daily thus abused." He says, "that the foulest and most inhuman action of these times was the violation of funeral monuments. Marbles which covered the dead were dug up and put to other uses; tombs hacked and hewn in pieces; inscriptions or epitaphs, especially if they began with an "orate pro anima," or concluded with "cujus animæ propitietur deus," for greediness of the brass, or for that they were thought to be antichristian, pulled out from the sepulchres, and purloined, dead carcases for gain of their stone or leaden coffins, cast out of their graves, notwithstanding this request engraven upon them, "propter misericordiam Jesu requiescant in pace." These commissioned grave-rakers, these gold-finders who make such deep search into the bottom of ancient sepulchres, pursued their barbarous rage against the dead, though in the second and fourteenth years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, their savage cruelty was discountenanced by a royal proclamation. He mentions, "that in Saint Leonard's church, Shoreditch, the ancient epitaphs were all taken away for covetousnesse of the brasse, by one Doctor Hanmer, vicar of this church, which he converted into coin, and presently after went over into Ireland. Even where tombs had not been purposely broken and destroyed, they were suffered to grow waste with devouring time, or to be hidden under the seats or pews then erected, as was the case," he says, "in our Lady's chapel at the Abbey of St. Alban's, which was filled with the dead bodies of the nobilitié, slain in the great battle near that town, whose trophies were now in this barbarous manner defaced. Many monuments of the dead," he says, "in churches in and about this city of London, as also in

some places of the country, are covered with seats or pews, made high and easie for the parishioners to sit or sleepe in; a fashion," he adds, and his testimony is remarkable, " of no long continuance, and worthy of reformation*." With respect to the sacrilegious devastation of tombs in consequence of political fury, it is to France and the countries which unhappily fell under its impious domination, that we should rather look, though the religious reformers had been at work there also, for Francis Baldwin, a French lawyer, in the time of Calvin speaks of men then making war even upon the dead, the statues, sepulchres, the very bones and bodies of martyrs and princes, escaping not their barbarous hands†. Every one has heard how the French, in the first stage of their revolution, made war upon the dead and violated their quiet tombs, not being able to endure that mute history which, as Savedra says, " they afforded of the duties and the end of man;" but many are ignorant of the stupid and barbarous, and if possible, still more infatuated measure which they adopted every where, when they were phrenzied " to that worst pitch of all which wears a reasoning show," of transporting sepulchres from their original site, to form a museum of art in their capital, or within some central spot within the cities of which they had taken possession.

A greater proof of insensibility, of an utter want of all the feelings of taste and genius, to say nothing of religion, could scarcely be found in the history of nations. For what interest could be inspired by these tombs when deposited along with books and machinery in modern galleries of art, and removed from all the associations which had made them venerable? The sepulchre in which Abailard and Heloisa were buried, was indeed an object of interest when it was seen in the monastery of Paraclet, near Nogent-Sur-seine in Champagne, where Peter the Venerable had himself erected it; but what was it when placed in a museum in the street of the Augustins at Paris?

The tombs of the knights slain at the battle of Poitiers, such as those of the Duke of Athens, of John de Bourbon, of the two brothers, Chambely de Chatillon, and of

* Funeral Mem. p. 701.
† Respons. ult. ad Jo. Calvin.

other nobles who died for their country on that memorable day, could awaken a thousand recollections, and kindle an heroic flame, from the very circumstance of their being seen in the Franciscan convent in that city: but when removed to a distant capital, what were they but so many old stones, mere specimens of ancient sculpture? Poets might well direct their steps to the great Benedictine Abbey at Ferrara, in order to visit the sepulchre of Ariosto; but who could feel any interest in regarding it when it had been removed by those insane Frenchmen to the public library, in order, as they said, that it might be seen along with the finest editions of his poems! Yet this is done by the nation which has taken upon itself to designate the middle ages as a blank in history, an epoch when men were deprived of all intelligence and genius! It is, however, like striking the slain, to expose the weakness of these poor sophists; let us leave them to babble, and only remark within ourselves how wise were the ages of faith in respect even of all material arrangements, and how much more favourable they were, not only to poets, but to the common feelings of the human heart. It was then that a natural order was followed, combining variety of measures in accordance with the variety of circumstances in nature. A poet, a learned philosopher, or a renowned hero, was buried in the church of his parish, in the monastery where he had died, or in his ancestral tomb.

In the eighth century, we find that the desire of being buried in one's paternal sepulchre led to the decrees of synods *; although St. Augustin had shown, that the divine menace to a prophet, that he should not be buried in the sepulchre of his fathers †, was merely intended to excite a human affection, and was no further a punishment than in afflicting the living ‡. In like manner the works of a painter were deposited in the church for which he had designed them, to which, perhaps, like Rubens, he had presented them, as a perpetual memorial of his having within their walls received baptism, the portal to his faith. Thus every monument was seen in the place for which the master-mind of its author had designed it, and in connection with the circumstances

* Dacherius Spicileg. Tom. IX. † 3 Reg. 13. 21.
‡ De Cura pro Mortuis.

which often constituted its chief interest. In this men followed wise and cunning Nature, who scatters her various productions over the whole world, and is never found to collect them all in one place, without regard to climate or locality, or to the harmonious accordance of surrounding tones and objects. Such was the system of the middle ages, when an idea was the origin and determining principle of every material monument, imparting to it life and reason. But for this the wisdom of the moderns has substituted a mere fictitious and nominal system, according to which, monuments are erected, and institutions founded at random, or from mere material motives, while, as it were, the soul is left to follow or not, as accident may determine. In order to have uniformity, and classification, and centralization in inanimate things, which, by their very nature, should be various and dispersed, these sophists, who introduce anarchy and division into spiritual things, hasten to disinter the dead, and to collect their mouldering ashes into common cemeteries, in the same manner as they would collect all the paintings and statues of every city in one gallery in Paris; thus presenting us, in one spot, with death in mass, and depriving all other places of the sanctity with which, when seen in detail, it had formerly invested them. No more tender connection can be traced between the study and the tomb, between genius and the country which it had adorned, between virtue and the home and friends to which it was endeared! but all is confounded and amassed together in one overwhelming crowd, to which an unnatural, unmeaning, and even burdensome uniformity, is imparted. True, these vast cemeteries, within the ancient enclosures of suppressed monasteries, may have an imposing aspect, from the beauty of the ancient site; and at all events, they supply an object to the idle traveller, who, without it, might be at a loss which way to direct his steps; but assuredly one may regret the time when these sepulchres were found standing apart over the very graves which had originally received their tenants, when the knight lay by the side of the palmer, and the monarch by the counsellor whom he had loved; when one could trace signs of tender connection even among the dead, and when graves and tombs entered into the system of an harmonious variety. Such discipline, one may remark, was more favourable to the asso-

ciations of the learned, to the illustration of history, to the interests of friendship, to the desire of mourners, and to one of the deepest, and perhaps most amiable feelings, of our nature.

CHAPTER X.

Brief shall be the last act of what may be termed this fourth school, in our well-intended but imperfectly-accomplished course. We have endeavoured to show, from ancient writings, what was the character of mourners during the ages which were most illuminated with the light of faith: and I am much deceived if enough has not been here advanced to prove that they were abundantly blessed; that if they were not able to define evil with as much minuteness as the ancient philosophers, they were able to escape from it better. That their mourning was sanctified and angelic; that it was blessed in their calamities, in their profound studies of wisdom, in their loves, in their spiritual exercises, in their penance, in their sickness, and in their death. They wept, it is true, before the Lord who made them. As the great Cardinal Bellarmin prescribes, they wept for sorrow, because they had provoked to anger the best of Parents. they wept for joy, because the Lord who made them was mild and of great mercy: they wept for sorrow, because their benignant Creator, to whom the Church offers up prayers with weeping, loveth justice: they wept for joy, because He desireth not the death of sinners, but that they may be converted and that they may live *." They mourned after the example of the prophets, of the apostles, and of the universal Church. They mourned with a Bernard and a Vincent, from a consideration of sin and its penalty. They mourned with a Francis and a Bonaventura, from a remembrance of the passion of Christ.

* Bellarmin. de Gemitu Columbæ. Lib. I. c. 1.

They mourned with an Anthony and a Hermit Nicolas, from an anticipation or a retrospect of the persecutions of the Church by heretics—for the latter foresaw the Lutheran, as the former had wept from foreseeing the Arian heresy. They mourned with an Augustin and a Chrysostom, from a consideration of the miseries of the human race. They mourned with a Thomas Aquinas and an Anselm, from the depth and penetration of a mind, to which were made known the hidden and unsearchable things of the wisdom of God. Finally, with a Bellarmin, they mourned, from a sense of the necessity of tears; for the sighs of the dove, the tears of the just—tears of sorrow and tears of love—are an earnest of the remission of sins, an imitation of the virtue of Christ, the nurse of compassion, of reformation of manners, and of charity. They indicate a contempt for the world and a love for God. They are fruitful in works of penitence and mercy during life, and a consolation which surpasseth thought at the hour of death.

All this I have attempted to illustrate from the history of the ages of faith: but still, something more remains in reference to the conclusion of that benign and gracious sentence from the Mount, which proceeds to affirm that these mourners, seen to have been already blest from the operation of a general law, were, in addition, by an especial and supernatural grace, to be comforted. "Beati qui lugent quia consolabuntur." They that sowed in tears were to reap in joy: going they had wept, casting abroad their seeds; but coming, they were to return with exultation, carrying their sheaves with them. In this life they had sorrow, because, as St. Augustin interprets the passage, they had lost, by their conversion to God, parents, brethren, and friends, and felt that persecution, which all holy members of the Catholic Church will have to suffer in every age*: or they had sorrow, because, according to the commentary of St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, and St. Ambrose, they mourned for their own sins and for the sins of others. They thus had sorrow; a sorrow, indeed, most sweet: for, as St. Augustin says, "Dulciores sunt lacrymæ orantium, quam gaudia Theatrorum†." And though men of this world, who know

* Lib. de Serm. Dom. in Monte.

† Tract. in Psalm cxxvii.

not the sighs of the dove, can scarcely be persuaded of this, nevertheless, as Bellarmin says, it is most true *. Still, in comparison of what awaiteth those that are to be of angels signed, they had sorrow; but their Lord was again to see them, and their hearts were to rejoice, and their joy no one was to take from them. They were to be comforted. But who shall attempt to describe that comforting? Blessed be they that weep; and God himself shall wipe the tears from their eyes. "Those must needs be comfortable tears," adds Father Diego de Stella, "which the blessed hand of our Master doth wipe away!" Even in this brief and wretched life what comforting was theirs! St. Augustin remarks, "That it would be tedious to enumerate the instances of divine being called by the same names as human things, although they are separated from each other by an incomparable diversity†." Man, when a citizen of the earthly republic, uses God's words, and imparts to them his own infelicity. Thus, in the language which conveys heavenly truth to his understanding, to mourn is to be brought as near to God, the source of all happiness, as the present condition of human life admits. In the language of the impious city, to mourn, is to be wretched, to have every principle of joy annihilated within us,—that is, to be separated from him as far as possible. In the sense of faith, in the view of the city of God, mourning carries with it its own consolation; it is, in fact, only one component ray in the lustrous beam of that light which imparteth unclouded felicity. To mourning belongs charity, and the peace of God, along with which nothing harsh or bitter can ever enter, but only sweetness, and such happy things as have affinity with the glorious end for which souls were first created. Religion, in her severest discipline, seeks to render no one sad. She imposes misery on no one; but, as St. Bernard says, "Charitas vult te tuum sentire dolorem, ut jam non habeas unde dolere: vult te tuam scire miseriam, ut incipias miser non esse‡." The mourning which she inculcates stands opposed, therefore, not to joy and pleasure, as Johnson and other modern writers would insinuate, but to the sadness of the world

* De Gemitu Columb. I. 3.
† De Diversis Quæst. ad Simplician. Lib. I.
‡ Epist. 2.

and of death, to that unjust delight which, as the poet of old could discern, was necessarily followed by a bitter end—

——— τὸ δὲ πὰρ δίκαν
γλυκὺ πικροτάτα μενει τελευτά *.

But, perhaps, some one will be inclined to suggest a doubt here; and will refer, in justification of his incredulity, to what has occurred during many ages in lands where heresy has been allowed to conquer, and to impart, in show, at least, all the treasures of the earth to such as fell down to worship it. Methinks I see his mind, by thought on thought arising, sore perplexed, and with vehement desire, seeking solution of the maze! True, there are cases, and history, both ancient and modern, furnishes numerous examples of it, when every one, at the bottom of his soul, is forced to admit, that the cause of the conqueror has pleased the Providence which rules the world, that of the conquered, good men. This history, undoubtedly involves one of them; but if these persons diligently attend, they will understand that, while full consolation was imparted to just mourners, even in the present life, to the unjust who seemed to have no need of consolation, the punishment of men was wanting, not that of God. Men defended a tyrant, and pursued and consummated what he had begun in a most detestable action; men praised a most base and pernicious sophistry; men pronounced a sentence of acquittal; men felt not in themselves the injury of their crime; men gave to these destroyers palaces and domains. I admit that all benefits from men were their's, and greater could not be demanded; but from God—Almighty God!—what greater punishment could fall upon them than that fury and madness? "Unless," as Cicero says, "perchance, in tragedies, you think that those whom you behold, covered with wounds, and consumed with grief of body, are objects of greater wrath than those who are introduced raving and insane; but (as the Roman orator continues) the complaints and groans of Philoctetes are not so miserable as that exultation of Athamas, and those horrid dreams of matricide." These sophists, in

* Pindar, Isth. Od. VII.

rejecting the sweet and salutary yoke of authority; when they overthrew the houses of the religious; when they drove the best men, by sanguinary laws, from the administration of the state; when they established the principle of private judgment, that is, universal disorder; when they overthrew holy churches, to build out of them palaces for themselves; when they profaned and abolished sacred rites; when they did not perceive that they were impious and insane; then did they suffer those punishments which alone, in many instances, in this present state of existence, are constituted, by the God of heaven, for the wickedness of men: for, indeed, the infirmity of our body is subject of itself to many sufferings, it is destroyed often by the slightest cause: the peace and joy of the soul can triumph over its pains; but the darts of God are plunged into the minds of the impious. Without doubt, some nations, in their collective capacity, have exhibited all the effects which might be expected à priori to follow from a judicial sentence registered against them in heaven; and that, too, while the citizens of the earthly republic were loud in their praises, admiring and esteeming them eminently glorious. True, indeed, great caution is necessary in coming even to any private conclusions with respect to the judgment of God, to which so many wise and holy men, like Cardinal Allen and his contemporary Bishop Watson, have wished that the punishment of states were wholly left; nor need any one be told that, according to ecclesiastical science, a general retention of sins can affect the title of no man formally; but leaving distinctions to divines, and, waving the theological argument altogether, there are historical facts crowding upon the memory, which may well incline thoughtful men to suspect secretly, that a great deal more may frequently be true than what the school requires them to believe, or even than what the caution of the school would permit them to announce. Wars, famine, and pestilence, are not the only scourges of God; there are moral invasions, which proclaim, with even greater certainty, the visitation of his anger: pride, avarice, and a mind wholly given up to the worship of matter, constant external prosperity, leading to hardness of heart, and misery of the poor: the being puffed up, like the Corinthians, having no more sorrow, no mourning of

the dove, but in its place the gloom and sullen groans of Babylon; the want of spiritual resources, the want or the corruption of the word of God, and the confusion of Babel succeeding to unity of religion; the rich being engulfed in stupid sensuality, and involved in an ignorance which appears to some invincible; the co-operation of all things to obscure the light of Christ, and to make men aliens in spirit from his church;—these, and other effects following, from the removal of the candlestick, are still more evidently the inflictions of Divine justice; so that, whoever has beheld a nation, with manners thus opposite to the supernatural discipline of the city of God,—a nation, thus, to use prophetic language, adoring the beast and its image, receiving its inscription on the forehead and on the hand, may certainly be warranted in concluding, that he has seen a chastised people, not indeed without numerous particular exemptions, for the general schemes of Divine beneficence are never, in any place, wholly interrupted: but yet, in its collective character, and as far as suits the purpose of furnishing a perpetual lesson to mankind, a people already punished, already under the fearful scourge of Almighty Providence, whether the cause be to human ken fathomable or not. But in the judgment of those who observe history with the eyes of faith, this is the order of grace, and as clearly to be understood as that of nature. Peter and Paul, they say, live yet to mark our doings. Many a time ere now the sons have, for the sire's transgressions, wailed: and that living justice, upon the primal seat, vested with mysterious power, when it denounces pride no longer tolerable, binds it not in vain. The very heathen philosopher could discern what, in the secrets of Divine judgment, would be most terrible for man. "It was," says Maximus of Tyre, "from transgressing the eternal law that Alcibiades was unfortunate; not when he was summoned from Sicily by the Athenians, nor when he fled beyond Attica; these were small calamities, for Alcibiades in exile was greater than those who remained at home; he was honoured by the Lacedæmonians; he fortified Deceleia; he became the friend of Tissaphernes, and the general of Sparta: but the punishment of Alcibiades began long before; it was ordained by an older law, and by older judges. When he left the Lyceum, was condemned by Socrates, and proscribed by philoso-

phy:—then it was that Alcibiades was banished and undone." And now, what remains but to express a fervent hope, that some of the many mourners of earth may be induced, by reflections such as these, drawn from the testimonies of past ages, to approach nearer than they have ever hitherto done to contemplate their history. For there is but one way to escape evil, which is by flying to the same citadel in which the ancient Christians stood, and thence taking up the same arms as were used by them; but, from it, alas! at how great a distance are the men of our age! "O quam longe recessimus ab apostolica disciplina," cried Bellarmin, "et quam rara nunc est, quæ olim frequentissima erat, gratia lacrymarum *." Men of sorrows, who mourn with an unavailing, an unblessed grief, you may have heard how the Sage of Greece exhorted his anxious disciples to search, not only into the wisdom of their own country, but also into that of the barbarous nations, whose opinions and customs they should, he said, thoroughly investigate, in search of some epode, to deliver them from the fear of death, sparing neither riches nor labour, as there is nothing for which they could more wisely expend both †. In some respects, you stand in the same position as these disciples: in the midst of supposed superior civilization, and in spite of your profession, still conscious of being unpossessed of a practical remedy against that dread of death from which it is clear not all the advance of science, nor all the refinements of your philosophic and liberal views of religion can deliver you at your last hours. Be not then ashamed to imitate the humility prescribed to them, and take that salutary hint from old philosophy, and apply it to the present circumstances, and to your own condition. You call the ages of faith dark ages in the world's history; and you suppose that the generation of men which succeeded, from the fall of the Roman empire till the sixteenth century, were a race of barbarians, at least in comparison with those which belong to the ancient and modern civilization. Well, be it so. Let us, for a moment, grant all that you demand; let us call them dark and barbarous ages. Literature, you say, will have it so; but remem-

* De Gemitu Columbæ, Lib. I. 9.
† Plato Phædo, 78.

ber that philosophy may take very little heed of the judgment of literature. At all events, it is never scared by a reproachful epithet; and you must admit, with Plato, that it matters not the least, whether you have recourse to Greeks or barbarians, provided you can but discover somewhere that epode, that efficacious remedy, to enable you to render blest your sorrows, your sickness, and your death.

At present, in the midst of all these modern lights, of all this boasted civilization, so contrary to the simplicity which characterizes the city of God, you mourn; you fear sickness; and, above all, you shrink in terror from the thought of death; at least, you cannot pretend that men in these days die with as much tranquillity, and with as bright and stedfast a hope as the men whose dissolution we have been witnessing in the ages which you designate as those of monastic darkness. You mourn, and your mourning is avowedly without hope, without a blessing. Indeed, your own guides affirm that, for sorrow, there is no remedy provided by nature; it is often occasioned, by accidents irreparable, and dwells upon objects that have lost or changed their existence: it requires what it cannot hope, that the laws of the universe should be repealed, that the dead should return, or the past should be recalled. There is nothing in the modern civilization which can make it otherwise. Well, then, will it not be reasonable to try what may be found among the barbarians? "O, wearied spirits! Come, and hold discourse with us, and be by none else restrained." "You have no comfort in your calamity," as the poet testifies, "but that of tears, and the cries of lamentation, and the Muse which has sorrow. This is all the sweetness which that muse can promise to you*." "O, is it not just to call you," as the poet styled men of old, "unwise and vain, who have invented hymns for days of festal joy, for banqueting and triumph, the delightful sounds to sweeten prosperous life, but who have never discovered, by the muse and harmonious ode, how to soothe the bitter sorrows of mortals, when deaths and dreadful evils come to visit houses; then there would have been some advantage from song to wretched men; but in times of joyful feasting, what need

* Eurip. Troades, 608.

of sounds to increase a pleasure which is already at its full—

> στυγίους δὲ βροτῶν οὐδεὶς λύπας
> εὕρετο μούσῃ καὶ πολυχόρδοις
> ᾠδαῖς παύειν, ἐξ ὧν θάνατοι,
> δειναί τε τύχαι σφάλλουσι δόμους*.

Ah! if you would but condescend to visit the humble and meek race, and investigate their ways, lifting up your eyes, like men in those antique days, to the mountains whence help might come to you†, you would, like them, find consolation according to the multitude of the sorrows which oppress your heart. Secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum in corde meo, consolationes tuæ lætificaverunt animam meam‡. Then you would say, like them, "Gladden the soul of thy servant, my Saviour and Creator; gladden it, because I have raised it to thee. It was on the earth, and on the earth it was full of bitterness; lest it should become corrupted through bitterness, lest it should lose all the sweetness of thy grace, I have raised it to thee, who alone art joy. The world is full of bitterness. Rightly are men admonished that they should raise their hearts to thee. Let them hear and obey. Let them raise to heaven what is wretched upon earth §." St. Augustin has attempted to enumerate the principal sources of pain and sorrow to men, and mournful indeed is the view which he reveals of this life ||. Yet, then, with this confirmed, even by your own experience, "You would feel," as St. Chrysostom says, that it was a greater gift to suffer than to raise the dead; for, by the gift of miracles, God would render thee a debtor to himself; whereas, when he sendeth thee sufferings, he maketh himself debtor to thee; he has pledged himself that you shall be comforted." Then, however afflicted, your peace of mind would not be lost: "But," as St. Bernard says, "your desolation would be sweet. Desolatur suaviter." Joy would well from grief, as in that beauteous gulf of Spezzia, where one sees the sweet water rise up out of the salt and bitter sea. "It is only the beginning of misfortune," as the author of

* Eurip. Medea. 193. † Ps. cxx. 1.
‡ Ps. xciii. 19. § Ludovic. Blosii Tractat. in Ps. lxxxv.
|| De Civitate Dei, Lib. XXII. 22.

the Martyrs says, " which could for an instant alarm you." In the full height of adversity, you would find, in separating yourself from the earth, tranquil and serene regions; as when one ascends the bank of a furious torrent, one is horror struck at the entrance of the valley, and with the roar of the waves; but in proportion as one ascends the mountain, the falls diminish, the noise dies away, and the course of the traveller comes to an end in regions of silence near the sky, in sweet verdant spots, enamelled with a thousand new flowers, far from all that can wound or contaminate pure and innocent creatures. Yes, the ineffable goodness of God would be felt even when he punishes, for it would be the effect of his correction that you had discovered this source of surpassing joy. The hour when the solitary soul, widowed of its last hope, would expect nothing more from the earth, when friendship would fail, and weak man, who fears the contagion of misfortune, would leave you face to face with grief, when the future would have no longer any charms to make you wish for the morrow; then, if you were one of those humble and blessed mourners, the voice of God would be heard in the silence of your heart, that language which can be mixed with no other, and which consoles and beatifies those who cannot be otherwise comforted*. At the sweet sounds of comfort you would turn from earth, and in saintly contemplation behold a love which must be left in silence here; " Nor through distrust," as Dante saith, " of words only, but that to such bliss the mind remounts not without aid†". Then, too, God would give such grace that, without boasting, you might use whatever language had been framed by sages to express how little they feared calamity: happy were your death, your ending blest, your torments easy, full of sweet delight. After having been in the dungeon in the midst of sufferings, like another chosen vessel, you would participate in his raptures into the third heaven; after having sunk under the weight of chains with Peter, you would be delivered and comforted by an angel. Do you not hear what the holy Church sings? Francis, Francis the mourner, the despised, the persecuted; Francis, poor and humble, enters rich into Hea-

* La Martine, Harmonies Poetiques et Religieuses.
† Parad. XVIII.

ven, and is honoured with celestial hymns. Well, then, thither too would you follow to receive the last abundant consolation, for

> " There are the treasures tasted, that with tears
> Were in the Babylonian exile won*."

Oh, that Highest God would deal thus with these poor mortals for whom Christ wept, and bled, and died, with these deceived but still generous creatures, once made in God's own image, in the freshness of their being so gifted virtually, that all better habits would wondrously have thrived, and possessed of faculties to be again his glorious champions, defenders of his holy city, the joy of mystic Sion. O that he would behold them in their state calamitous, betrayed by apostates, dispossessed of strength, and turn their labours, for he ever can, to peaceful end. Then, in the blest kingdoms, meek of joy and love, all the saints in solemn troops would entertain them. Angels, ever bright and fair, would sing; and, singing in great glory, comfort them, and wipe the tears for ever from their eyes.

* Dante, Parad. XXIII.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

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